*This is the Original Edition printed in Edinburgh and issued in America by authority of the Publishers.*

LIBRARY
UNIV. OF ILL.

APRIL 1920.

# BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

NEW YORK:
THE LEONARD SCOTT PUBLICATION CO.,
HARR FERRER, PROP.
249 WEST 13TH STREET.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

Entered at the New York Post-Office as second-class matter.

Entered as second-class matter, July 3, 1917, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

## ENGLISH EDITIONS

MONTHLY REVIEWS

**Nineteenth Century and After** **Fortnightly Review** **Contemporary Review**

$6.00 each per year; any two, $11.50; the three, $17.00. Single copies, 75 cents

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

**Blackwood's Magazine**

$4.00 per year; single copies, 40 cents

QUARTERLY REVIEWS

**Edinburgh Review** **Quarterly Review**

$4.50 each per year; the two, $8.50 per year. Single copies, $1.50

Blackwood's Magazine and one quarterly, $8.00 per year;
with two quarterlies, $12.00 per year

All subscriptions payable in New York funds

Subscriptions for less than six months at single copy prices

Prices for Canada on application

LEONARD SCOTT PUBLICATION CO.

249 West 13th Street New York

## SCHOOLS

### New Jersey

**College of St. Elizabeth**

Convent Station, New Jersey
45 Minutes from New York

**Catholic College for Women**

Registered by Regents

**Standard College Preparatory Courses**

Academy of St. Elizabeth
Send for Catalogue

### Ohio

**Art Academy of Cincinnati**

Thoroughly Equipped Art School
Winter and Summer Term

J. H. GEST, Director CINCINNATI

### New York

**Saint Mary's School**
**Mount Saint Gabriel**

PEEKSKILL-ON-THE-HUDSON, N. Y.

**Boarding School for Girls**

Under the charge of the Sisters of St. Mary.
New fireproof building beautifully situated.
For catalogues address *The Sister Superior.*

## SCHOOLS

### California

**California Hospital, Los Angeles**
**School for Nurses** The most noted private hospital in this beautiful residence city.

Medical, Surgical, Maternity, Eye and Ear and X-Ray Departments. In the midst of tropical gardens. Booklets free. 1414 South Hope St., Los Angeles. Also a limited number of young men (High School Graduates) admitted to a two years' course.

**University of Southern California**
(Los Angeles)

COLLEGES—Liberal Arts, Medical, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Law, Music, Fine Arts, Oratory and Theology.

HIGH STANDARDS in Scholarship and Morals. Expenses moderate. Climate unexcelled. 3100 Students. Send for Catalogue.

Pres. GEORGE F. BOVARD, A.M., D.D., LL.D.
University Avenue

### Oregon

**University of Oregon—Eugene**

Graduate School Summer School
College of Liberal Arts School of Medicine
College of Engineering School of Law
School of Education School of Music

Send for Catalog Address THE REGISTRAR

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCLIV. APRIL 1920. VOL. CCVII.

# AMRITSAR.

BY AN ENGLISHWOMAN.

## I. THE RALLYING-POST.

I HAD arrived, new to the country, at the end of January; Amritsar was my first "station," and at the beginning of April I was living with Mr and Mrs J. in one of a group of houses called Canal Bungalows. After breakfast on the morning of Thursday, I thought for a moment of visiting the bazaar in the city; but I had only returned from Lahore the night before, and what I had seen there of the crowds at the Hartal (day of mourning) on the 6th had made me nervous. Moreover, the attitude of the shopkeepers in our own Hall Bazaar for some time past had been distinctly unfriendly, and the last time I went there my bearer had warned me not to get out of the tonga. The extreme heat which succeeds the extreme cold of the Punjab was already beginning to be oppressive, and I preferred the coolness of the bungalow to the heat and glare outside, so that fortunately for myself I changed my mind. I had just lain down under the punkah about one o'clock when a servant announced that a lady wished to see me. I rose reluctantly, annoyed with my bearer for having admitted a visitor after my order that I was not to be disturbed; but before I could leave the room a second knock announced the arrival of more visitors, and my bearer poured forth a long story, of which the only words I could catch were "Badmash" (scoundrels) and "Bazaar." His voice was drowned by the shrill cries of babies in the next room, and it

flashed upon my memory that the house had been chosen as a rallying-post for European women and children in the event of trouble. My suspicions were quickly confirmed when I came into a drawing-room full of people I had never seen before, who paid no attention whatever to my entry. Fresh arrivals poured in every minute, and from one or two acquaintances among them I elicited the little that they knew of what had happened. A few minutes earlier a wild crowd had burst over the Hall bridge (which connects the city with the Civil Lines), driving back and stoning the small picket which was posted there. No shots had then been fired, but the howl of the mob could be heard a quarter of a mile away, and the residents in the main thoroughfare were rapidly warned to leave their bungalows for the rallying-posts. The crowd was close at hand, and a moment's delay might prove fatal; but at this somnolent hour it was no small task to persuade the women to move, and one of them persistently refused to quit her house because her baby was asleep. As people left their bungalows a few shots were heard from the direction of the bridge, but nothing was known then of the course of events.

From men passing on horseback we gradually learned a few details, and before long we saw smoke and flames rising from the city and heard that Europeans were being murdered. After a time it was known that the banks and Government buildings were on fire, and that the murdered men included three of the bank officials. The old Sikh cashier of the National Bank had seen his master beaten down and had fled to procure help, but before he could return kerosene oil was poured on the still living body, and only one boot was left for identification of the remains. A few of the Europeans employed in the banks had succeeded in escaping to the "Kotwali" or city police station, and were still hemmed in there.

The afternoon passed slowly, with rumours and alarms which increased the suspense of the many women who did not know where their husbands were. Those of us who had anything to do were too busy to think, and three of the women and three of the babies were ill; but human nature is always the same, and I was amused to see on returning to my room that my dressing-table had been depleted of everything that could be used as a cosmetic, as if a horde of locusts had settled on it, and we had to make peace between one or two who "could not sit under a punkah" and the majority who were prepared to faint if it was turned off.

About half an hour before sunset, news came that the Fort was ready to receive us. Every possible conveyance had been secured, and we packed ourselves in, making a picture like Epsom road on the Derby

Day. Very few had brought anything with them, so we stripped the house of everything that could be used as bedding during the coming night.

## II. THE FORT.

The Fort of Gobindgarh, which we were now to know so well, was built over a hundred years ago by the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh, to protect the treasure which he kept with the bankers of Amritsar, prosperous then as now. It is said that he employed an Italian engineer, and traces of its exotic origin linger in the names of the different blocks and passages. To reach the Fort, we had to cross the railway line, which our handful of troops had held all day against the hordes from the city, by the Rego bridge. We set forth with some trepidation; but the arrival of some Gurkha troops about this time enabled the road to be picketed, and the way was safe. Men from the Central Followers' Depôt, armed with staves, accompanied us, and it was not long before we were driving through the winding entrances to the Fort.

Dusk was now falling, and we had to make haste to prepare for the night. We found places where we could, and most of us packed into the upper storey of the "Cavalier Block," which rises in the centre of the great quadrangle. The heat, however, was stifling. There were not half a dozen fans in the whole Fort, including those in the hospital and the canteen hall, and many people found it the lesser of two evils to spend that night on the ground outside. One or two had managed to get their bedding brought in by their servants, but the rest were ill-equipped for the conditions they had to face. We distributed the heavy clothing, blankets, and rugs which we had brought from the bungalow, but there would not have been enough to go round if the garrison had not given up some of their blankets. Our next thought was to find a meal for the many women and children who had eaten nothing since early morning. We had only the scraps which we had brought away from the bungalow, but once again the soldiers came to our rescue and gave up half their bread ration. All these things were being done at once, amid indescribable turmoil.

A roll-call revealed 130 women and children, besides babies; the civilian men who were not too old or sick had already been posted to defence duties round the Fort and made up another fifty. A number of servants also had come down before the gates of the Fort closed at sundown, and presented another problem, as they required native food. While they were being given their handfuls of grain to last them till the morning, a grey-bearded old Sikh orderly, Sher

Singh, proudly refused to take his share, saying he had often gone without food for two or three days on the field of battle. This man set a splendid example throughout, and indeed all the servants behaved well under very trying circumstances.

It had long been dark, and we were still working hard to get things straight and settle people down for the night, when I was suddenly drawn away by an officer, who whispered a request for a lantern in order to bring in what was left of Mr Thomson's body from one of the banks. Desperately afraid lest this news should spread, I secured the only lantern in the Fort for him, and he went away. We afterwards heard that this was the body of Sergeant Rawlings, which had just been found, beaten to death, beneath the walls of the Fort, and not Mr Thomson's, which had not then been recovered. When nothing more was left to be done, some of us went on to the ramparts for a few minutes' quiet, and from the top of the western wall we saw the native city ablaze with electric light—a contrast to the darkness behind us.

At midnight we turned in, but daylight seemed to come before we had closed our eyes. The outlook was not pleasant for women who had never known a day's real hardship before: they found themselves suddenly stripped of all the decencies and comforts they had come to look upon as necessities, and surrounded by the miseries of dirt, heat, and overcrowding. There was no sanitation; everything depended on the servants, who had not yet been organised. There was no privacy, and we had to hide under our bedding to dress ourselves. Sixteen people shared one small room for the first three days, and those who had no rooms were really better off. There were no beds, no proper bedding, no mosquito-nets, no fans, and hardly any lighting. No one had any small personal possessions or any change of clothing. The place was infested with sandflies, and the stagnant water of the moat bred a virulent kind of mosquito. We did not know when we should get supplies of fresh food or milk, and as there were only twelve cups and about twenty plates, distribution of what food we had was difficult. One could summon up courage to face these conditions oneself, but the presence of so many babies and children made the situation really serious. One baby had developed typhoid fever that morning, and they all had requirements which could not be met.

Our numbers were swelling, for not everybody had managed to get to the rallying-posts. During the first night three survivors who had escaped into the police station were brought out of the city in Indian clothes. They told us of the infuriated crowds that had swept through the city on that terrible afternoon, drunk with their victory over unarmed men, and calling for "white

blood." A Dutch merchant had hidden all day, and had come out at nightfall, disguised in a "burka," the all-enveloping white cloth used by purdah women. An English lady doctor had managed to conceal herself in her hospital while the crowd tried to find her, and she also had escaped in the evening. Two Indian ladies, school-teachers, who had driven out of the city in a closed carriage, told us of the Sikh peasants who were pouring into the city with their iron-bound sticks. The booty from the National Bank had been carried out into the district as proof that the British rule was over, and all the riff-raff for miles round hurried in to be early on the spot if looting began again. The residents of the railway quarters came on to us from the railway station, in which they had taken refuge. They brought news of how the crowd had swept through the station, leaving behind them burning trucks and the hardly recognisable body of Guard Robinson. Everything was done to stop false reports: under the conditions I have described, *moral* was of paramount importance. But the real truth was so often worse than anything rumour could invent that one realised the uses of censorship. It is not surprising that there was a certain amount of hysteria, but our people as a whole showed both courage and good sense.

During the first three days every hour brought in some news from outside: of firing at Lahore, of murders at Kasur, of trains derailed and lines torn up, of telegraph wires cut and Government buildings and railway stations burnt; and we were very anxious about Europeans in the neighbourhood. The news was often vague, but with the breakdown in communications and our own experiences we were left to imagine the worst, and the native population had some excuse for their belief that the British *raj* was over. The situation was so precarious, and troops for defensive purposes so scarce, that it was decided to evacuate the Alexandra School, just inside the Civil Lines, in which the Indian Christian school children had been collected until now. It might be supposed by English readers that these children would have been safe from their own countrymen, but on the day of the riots the crowd set fire to one school, *with the girls inside*, and it was only the timely arrival of a small band of police that saved them. We were told now to prepare to receive them, and when they arrived they brought our numbers up to about 400—a heavy strain on our resources, but they were grateful and worked splendidly.

An office was established in the canteen hall, and all the civilian inhabitants of the Fort and their servants were registered. After a few days passes were issued for going out of the Fort, but this was not allowed without an armed escort, and everybody had to be back before sunset. The

time at which the pass-holder was due to return was registered, so that if he or she failed to report at the office at the hour named a search-party could be sent out immediately.

The days were monotonous, and we had to keep very quiet for the sake of Miss Sherwood, who was lying between life and death. Seizing her as she was bicycling from house to house in the city, the crowd had beaten her down with iron-bound sticks and left her for dead in the gutter, and for many days her life was in danger.

After about a week it was considered safe for us to travel, and arrangements were made to remove all the women and children to the hills. Special trains were run, packed with refugees from Lahore and Amritsar. It was considered better by the authorities that no women should be left behind, and they decided that Eurasians as well as Europeans should reside in hill stations for a time. The sight of these trains must have given residents in unaffected districts some idea of what the riots meant. And yet it has been stated that there was no real insecurity and no more trouble than the police could have dealt with. No European who was in Amritsar or Lahore doubts that for some days there was a very real danger of the entire European population being massacred, and that General Dyer's action alone saved them.

# FOLLOW THE LITTLE PICTURES!

BY ALAN GRAHAM.

## CHAPTER XXII.

NOTHING happened during the next few days in fulfilment of my doleful prognostications. There were comings and goings between the two households, and consultations galore on the one burning topic—the little pictures. Roy's wife did not come again to Hopeton, nor did Marigold visit her at Blackdykes, but Roy was over each day, and Morgan and the Laird on more than one occasion went to the farm.

It was about a week after the events narrated in the previous chapter that Morgan came to me in a state of excitement.

"What do you think of this, you old Jeremiah?" he said, shaking me to and fro by the arm—"the Squire has agreed to my engagement to Marigold——"

"Congratulations, my dear fellow," I interrupted, shaking him warmly by the hand. "You are a wonder-worker. I believe after all, Morgan, there is nothing on this earth that you might want that you wouldn't contrive to get."

"I hope you are right," he said, smiling merrily with twinkling glasses, "for I have got to get something else before the engagement is complete. You didn't let me finish. I was going to say that the Squire has agreed to my engagement to Marigold as soon as I find the treasure. Of course we are bound to find it, but I don't like the delay."

"What does Marigold say to it?" I asked.

"She is so afraid of her father that she is thankful for small mercies."

"At the least, I can congratulate you on working wonders in a very short time," I said.

"Thanks. I have been fairly successful. Roy gets more friendly with his father every day, and the old man himself is certainly turning over a new leaf. You will have to retract a lot of your prophecies yet, Seaton."

"I hope I shall," I answered.

It was that same day that—possibly spurred on by the obvious happiness of Morgan—I summoned up pluck to make a proposal of my own. It is impossible for me to keep my own feelings and actions out of this history of the Hopeton treasure, because, as will be seen, this resolution of mine had a direct bearing upon the solution of the cryptogram.

It happened, then, that I

Copyrighted in the United States of America by Messrs Little, Brown, & Co.

had arranged to meet Betty Forbes that afternoon by the fox-cover, in order to make an excursion to the top of the hill on whose lower slope the house of the Tanishes was built. There was a cairn on this hill, and although we had visited several of the hill-tops without finding a vestige of a clue, Betty was still as keen as before. To me it mattered little where we went, provided we went together.

It was a lovely summer day, with hardly a breath of wind, and a deep blue sky broken only by a few small fleecy clouds.

I waited by the stile on the margin of the wood, and watched the dainty form of Betty climbing towards me between the broken dykes on the old Roman Road. She was dressed in some light creamy material covered with dainty small sprigs of flowers, and wore a wide straw hat, beneath which glimpses of her rich hair shone as she looked up towards the wood where I awaited her. She had the light springy step of the country girl used to rough roads and rougher hillsides. It was a joy to sit there idly on the stile and see her coming towards me.

"Have I kept you long?" she called as she drew near. "Never mind, you are not really a busy person. I am! I stopped at Newgate's farm to inspect the new baby—a most interesting production!"

"You don't look to be dressed for hill climbing," I remarked, with my admiring eyes upon her.

"Don't call these things hills," she said, pointing to the green and purple knolls all around us. "Over there, on Arran, it is different. Goatfell would finish a frock like this, and I should be barefoot before I was half-way to the top. But this is just a gentle stroll up a heather-clad slope."

The hill we had chosen for our investigation lay, as I have said, behind Hopeton, and from where we met we had to cross the shoulders of two lower knolls before we started the actual climb. At two hillside burns that lay across our track I offered my hand to Betty, but she scorned my assistance, and jumped from stone to stone with an ease and grace born of long custom.

It took us under an hour to reach our destination. We threw ourselves down upon the springy heather to rest after the climb. The cairn that we had come to see was like all the others in the district—just a pile of loose stones gathered from the hillside. What we expected to discover merely by looking at it I do not know to this day. Perhaps some rude inscription on a stone may have been in our minds, but we were quite vague in our expectations.

"I am afraid we have drawn another blank," said Betty. She had discarded her hat, and lay upon the slope with her hands behind her head, her back resting on a weather-

worn boulder. "You are a broken reed, Bob. You don't seem to be as full of brilliant ideas as you ought to be."

"I have never professed to be one of the brainy ones," I said laughingly. "You expect too much from me. It is you who are the treasure-finder, Betty. You are far more enthusiastic than I am."

"Of course if you are *tired* of these expeditions you have only to say so!" Betty replied provokingly. "I have my own copy of the little pictures, and I can hobble about by myself somehow or other!"

"Betty, you are a cat!" I declared solemnly.

"Of course I am. Have you only just discovered it? All girls are cats, only some are more catty than others. But what particular trait of the feline race are you referring to at the moment?"

"The mouse trick," I answered. "You ought not to play with a poor chap. You know jolly well that it is not the Hopeton treasure that I run about all over the countryside after. It is another treasure, in my eyes thousands of times more valuable!"

"If you are going to be sentimental, Bob, I shall go home," said Betty lightly; but there was a new colour and a half-frightened expression growing upon her face, that told me she knew that we were getting down to essentials.

"I *am* going to be sentimental, and I shan't let you go home," I said firmly; but my heart was beating like a steam-hammer, and there was a buzzing in my head that spoke of strong excitement.

"Hark to the man-thing, with his masterful ways!" exclaimed Betty to the bare hillside; but her long red lashes drooped over her honest brown eyes.

"You know what treasure I want, Betty?" I said, and I found that my throat was so dry and husky all of a sudden that my voice sounded quite unlike itself.

"How can I know until you tell me?" said Betty in a low voice and without looking up.

I remember she was plucking the little purple flowers from a spray of heather as she spoke. It seemed to me that the warm summer air had become suddenly electrified. I felt a drumming in my ears and a vibration of the air upon my skin.

Betty's preoccupation with her spray of heather annoyed me. I wanted her full attention. I stretched out my hand and swallowed up both of hers —heather and all—in my grip.

"*You* are the only treasure for me, Betty," I said hoarsely. "I want *you*, and the little pictures can go hang for all I care."

"Don't speak about it, Bob, don't!" said Betty in a low tremulous voice. "I'm not ready to marry; I didn't expect you to speak so soon. I haven't looked life in the face yet. I'm just a girl—enjoying herself. . . . Can't we go on doing that?"

I shook my head.

"No!" I replied. "It is not enough! We are friends

—and the best of friends; but I want a wife. I am no longer content to be a pal, and go treasure-seeking for the pleasure of seeing you and listening to your dear voice. I must have you for my very own. Any one can be your friend—I am your lover."

At last Betty raised her long lashes and looked me in the eyes, with a shy smile in which there seemed a hint of fear.

"I wish we could have stayed longer on the old terms, Bob. It was so jolly; and I don't want to grow up," she said.

"If you care for me, Betty, the new terms will be to the old like—like—champagne to ginger-ale."

"I wonder!" she said doubtfully. Then, as though shaking off her fear and indecision with an effort, she sat up and drew her hands away from mine. "Bob," she said, "I shan't promise you now. I am very, very fond of you. You know that quite well. I'll make a bargain with you. Come! Read me the little pictures, and I'll marry you as soon as you like!"

I shook my head at that.

"No, no!" I cried. "Don't stake our love upon a chance like that! The cipher may never be solved, and are we to drag on and on apart because of a mere puzzle that doesn't even concern either of us?"

"I don't say that, Bob," replied Betty with a sweet sunny smile. "I don't say I will never marry you until the pictures are read, but that I will marry you as soon as you read them."

"But you love me, Betty?"

I placed my hand again over her two small ones, and looked steadily into her big brown eyes; but the long lashes fell, as though she were afraid of what I might read there.

"Scotch people are shy of that word, Bob," she said hesitatingly. "I can't say it—but I do l—like you a lot."

"Then withdraw that silly condition about the little pictures, and promise to be my wife."

"I want time to get used to it all," she answered, shaking her head gently. "Read the little pictures, Bob. There is time enough. I feel so young to promise to marry any one."

"It isn't *any one*—it is *me* we are talking about. I don't believe the pictures will ever be solved, and I don't want to wait years for you, Betty. It is so unnecessary."

But Betty stuck to her point. I argued it all ways with her, but the cipher had come to be a kind of mild obsession, and I could not force it out of my track. I knew that Betty loved me, as surely as I knew my own feeling for her. One gets to know. There can be few proposals made in which there is much doubt of the answer.

It was a most aggravating situation, yet there was nothing for me to do but submit. I had at least the consolation of knowing that it would all come right in the end. Curiously enough, I did not feel spurred on to solve the cipher as quickly as possible in order to obtain my reward. I had

struggled so often with those baffling pictures already, that I felt that there was nothing more to be done—nothing but wait patiently until Betty would tire of the search and be my wife of her own free will.

So we lay there silent upon the pungent springy heather, with the hot July sun beating down upon us, each busy with thoughts of the other, and each, after the recent intimate talk, shy of meeting the other's eyes.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

From where we lay on the warm hillside we had a glorious panoramic view of the district, and of the Firth of Clyde with all its islands. I have already described how much I was struck by the beauty of the Clyde in an early part of my story, but it is necessary that I dwell for a moment upon the foreground of our landscape.

Immediately beneath us, and less than half a mile away as the crow flies, lay Hopeton—the Big Hoose, as the country people called it. Looking down, one could trace the whole course of the Hopeton Burn to the spot where it flowed into the Firth.

The ranges of low hills on either side of the glen were beneath us, for the hill upon whose slope Hopeton was built was the highest of the knolls in the neighbourhood. So, from where we sat, we looked down upon the summits of the other hills, each with its rough cairn of stones. On the right side of the glen, as we faced the sea, the slopes were purple with blooming heather, but the range on the left was grazing land, and here and there one could see the moving white dots that were sheep.

As I lazily glanced over this panorama, I picked out Blackdykes and the wood where I had found Roy mourning over his injured wife. Subconsciously I counted the hills that lay between us and the wood. I called up in my mind that scene in the moonlit clearing, where Roy sat moaning at the base of the rough stone cairn. How clearly could I recall the sounds of that night—the clatter of the wood-pigeons in the trees overhead and the strange cries of Roy in his trouble! I had never returned to the spot.

Gradually an idea crystallised in my mind. I counted those hills again—this time with my senses fully alert. My heart beat faster as excitement grew upon me. I lay perfectly still and called before my eyes a facsimile of the little pictures—for I needed no paper to refresh my memory. . . .

A few minutes passed in silence. My mind was intent upon the little pictures, to the exclusion even of Betty.

At last I heaved a great sigh of relief and sat up.

"Tell me, Betty," I said, "in

what direction does Blackdykes lie from here?"

"Over there, stupid. Don't you see the farm?" she answered, misunderstanding my question.

"Yes, yes! I see it all right," I said hastily. "But where does it lie by the compass?"

"Um! Let me see. . . . That is north, and that is west," ruminated Betty, waving her hand in the directions as she named them. "I should say Blackdykes lies about south-west."

"Right you are! I thought so," I cried excitedly. "Now tell me, how far is it from Hopeton to Blackdykes—*as the crow flies?*"

"Why do you want to know that?" inquired Betty lazily. She could still see no point in my questions, and would not hurry with her answers. "Anyhow, I can't tell, none of my family having ever been crows."

"Do be sensible, Betty. This is serious!"

At that she sat up and looked at me strangely.

"Whatever is the matter, Bob? Why, you are quite panting with excitement."

"Tell me—how far is it from Hopeton to Blackdykes—*as the crow flies?*"

"About two miles, I should think. But why——"

I did not give her time to finish her question. I picked myself up from the heather, and before Betty had realised my intention, I had caught her by the hands, raised her from the ground, and, clasping her in my arms, covered her face with kisses.

She was so astonished that for a moment she made no resistance to my caresses. Then, recovering herself, she struggled free and started away from me with flushed face and startled eyes.

"Have you gone mad, Bob?" she exclaimed. "You had no right!——"

"I have the right, my darling. You are mine," I cried exultingly. I believe that in my excitement I executed a wild step-dance among the heather. Seeing, however, that Betty was really becoming frightened by my mad doings, I stopped to reassure her.

"It is all right, dear. I am not mad," I said more quietly. "But I have read the little pictures—and I am going to marry you as soon as all the arrangements can be made."

Betty looked at me sceptically.

"You are joking!" she said. "You can't possibly have done it so soon."

"But I have," I replied. "Come, let's sit down, and you shall be convinced."

I put my arm around her, and pulled her down upon the heather. I could feel the flurried beating of her heart beneath her breast. Betty, too, was beginning to experience the excitement of the chase.

"Now then, my dearest, here are the little pictures," I said exultingly, taking the copy from my pocket. "I can read them like print now that I have got the idea."

"Read them to me, then," Betty demanded. "Explain

afterwards, but read them to me now."

"Very well," I agreed. "Here goes—

"Two miles south-west of Hopeton, on the left of the Hopeton Burn, there is a wood on the north-east slope of the fourth hill in the range, counting from the top of the glen. In this wood there is a clearing, and in the middle of the clearing a rough stone cairn. Dig down three feet under the cairn, and you will find a chest containing the Hopeton treasure! That is clear enough, is it not?"

"It is quite clear," Betty agreed. "But is it right? I don't see how you can read all that long story from the pictures."

"I admit that I have spun it out to the fullest, but all the essentials are there, and you may be quite certain it is right—it can't mean anything else. Look, what is the first picture?"

"The Tanish crest," replied Betty. "You said long ago that it was only there as Hamish's seal to the paper."

"I was wrong," I admitted. "It means much more than that. You know that the crest is carved above the porch of Hopeton? Well, this crest gives us the starting-point. It stands for Hopeton. The next bit is easy. You have a crow—or rather a very crude conventional diagram of a crow—a long straight line, the figure two in Roman numerals, and the letters S.W. That can only mean 'Two miles as the crow flies.'"

"Yes, yes," cried Betty excitedly. "Go on. It must be so!"

"Then you really will marry me soon?" I demanded.

"Don't tease, Bob, like a dear," she answered coaxingly. "Follow the little pictures."

"Then we have the hills. There are four of them with the zigzag lines underneath. These lines mean *water*—not necessarily the sea as we thought—so why not the Hopeton Burn, with the hills above it?"

"True," agreed Betty. "But how will you account for the anchor, if you are going to do away with the sea?"

"We were wrong there too," I replied. "It isn't an anchor. But we have not come to that yet. We are just at the four hills. This thing reads from left to right, in lines, like a book. So we follow along the four hills with the burn flowing below, and on the fourth hill, which is just two miles as the crow flies from Hopeton, we find a wood on the north-east slope. There is the wood."

I pointed to the peculiar markings above the slope of the hill.

"These, I suppose, are trees, then," said Betty. "But why are they flying in the air?"

"It is only a conventional way of showing them," I explained. "Old Hamish may have seen some Chinese prints in which this method is adopted, or he may have invented it himself to make his cipher more obscure."

"I should like to be able to

compliment him on his success," Betty remarked. "Now we come to the square of stars. What do you make of them?"

"Trees again," I replied. "They are fir-trees shown in plan—a kind of bird's-eye view of them. They represent the trees surrounding the clearing in the wood. In the middle is the cairn—it is there, for I have seen it—and then we have the direction, 'Dig down three feet under the cairn and you will find a chest containing the Hopeton treasure.' It is a pick or mattock—not an anchor—you see!"

"Clever boy!" exclaimed Betty. "You must be right. It is all as plain as a pikestaff—once you know it. How you ever got on the right track I can't understand."

"It must have been the prize you promised me that stirred up my intellect," I replied. "Yet I was not conscious of it at the time. I was thinking of that night when I found Roy and Marie in the wood, and at the same time I was looking at the hills. The whole thing came upon me in a moment. Yet it must have been my prize that was behind it all. Betty, I am to have my reward?"

Betty laid her lovely head gently upon my shoulder.

"Yes, Bob," she whispered, and snuggled close with a sigh of content. . . .

It was some time later that we awoke once more to the realities of life. It was Betty who first returned to the practical side of things. For myself, I had forgotten the little pictures and the Tanishes with all their discords.

"Bob, Bob, this will never do," said Betty, sitting up and smoothing her hair where it had become ruffled in my embrace. "We are being horribly selfish. Think of these poor people anxiously waiting for you to read the little pictures to them!"

"Ignorance is bliss," I answered lazily. "They don't know that I have solved the thing, so they are no more anxious than usual. Don't be so practical, my dear."

"But it is getting towards evening, and it will be dark before the treasure is found."

"Never mind. Let's keep the secret to ourselves until morning, and then they will have a full day before them," I proposed. I did not care a scrap about the treasure. All that I wanted on earth was beside me there on the hill-top. Is it to be wondered at that I preferred to stay where I was?

But Betty would not have it so. She was full of curiosity and anxiety about the treasure, and nothing would satisfy her but that we should rush down the hill to Hopeton at once and organise the treasure-hunt.

"How are we to account to the Laird for the fact that you are acquainted with the cipher?" I asked. "He is not on the best of terms with you as it is, and he may make a fuss."

"He will be too excited over finding the treasure," Betty

declared. "Tell him all about it before he sees me, and I'll wager he never even notices that I am in the party—for I won't be left behind. I must be in at the death!"

"Very well. We shall have to risk it," I agreed. "You can wait outside while I tell the tale indoors. I shall try to send Marigold out to you, and perhaps, as you say, the Laird will be too preoccupied to notice."

With that we started off down the slope of the hill, running hand-in-hand through the heather, risking broken ankles in our pure high spirits and joy in life.

If I have dwelt over-long upon this scene upon the hill-top, it must be borne in mind that it was the happiest moment that I had known in my life, and, moreover, that my new understanding with Betty was inextricably mingled with the reading of the little pictures. The one could not be told without the other, and after all, what need to apologise for lingering over a pleasant passage in a tale wherein so much is gloomy and where tragedy looms so near ahead.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

It seemed almost as though fate had arranged the scene and the players in anticipation of my reading of the little pictures, for as we approached Hopeton we saw Roy's small two-seater standing outside, and in the dining-room, after leaving Betty in the garden, I found the whole family—Roy and his wife included—seated at the tea-table.

"I have solved the cipher!" I declared baldly as I entered.

"Dear, dear, dear! I knew you were the little winner," cried Morgan, and he jumped up from his seat to shake my hand warmly.

My disclosure was almost too much for Laird Tanish. He too started up from his chair, his face suffused with blood, and his eyes staring at me wildly.

"You've—solved—it!" he stammered word by word. Then, as the idea grew more familiar to him, his scattered senses returned. "Wonderful, Seaton, wonderful," he exclaimed. "But I always thought you would do it"—and rubbing his hands gleefully, he burst into a fit of his loud laughter.

They were all excited by my news. Marigold was silent, but I saw her glance at Jabez Morgan in a way that could not be mistaken, and she gave me a quick look of thanks that was equally easy to read. Her brother Roy was boyishly enthusiastic. Nothing would serve him but that we must find the treasure that very night.

"Is it near here, Doctor?" he demanded. "I shall never sleep until we know the value of it."

"That's the boy for me!" bellowed his father, clapping him on the shoulder vigorously. "He wants to feel the golden guineas trickling through his fingers! Ha, ha, ha!"

Roy's wife showed less interest than any one in my declaration. She had glanced up quickly at me when first I spoke, with a queer contemptuous look in her sidelong eyes, but she spoke no word, and I wondered if she was in truth annoyed that her prophecy of my failure had been proved untrue. Now, whilst the others talked, she remained calm and observant, watching the Laird and Roy with quick glances that missed nothing.

As soon as the excitement of my disclosure had calmed down I produced the little pictures, and once again read the directions hidden within them, and explained the symbols one by one.

"Dear, dear! You're some sleuth, Seaton," exclaimed Morgan when I had finished my exposition. "Yet the thing is so simple once you know it, that I could kick myself for being such a mutt. Well, well, Squire, your dream is coming true at last—and ours too, Marigold!"

Marigold blushed and lowered her eyes, but I saw her press Morgan's hand as it lay near hers upon the table.

The meal that was in progress was completely forgotten. The Laird was walking up and down or wandering round the table, rubbing his hands and giving vent to sudden ejaculations of astonishment and pleasure. The others—with the exception of Marie, who still sat in her place, attentive, but silent and cold—were gathered around me scrutinising the little pictures.

"But we are wasting time!" exclaimed Roy suddenly, starting up from his inspection of the cipher. "We can study the ingenuity of this at our leisure. The great thing now is to find the treasure. Father, what do you think? There is plenty of time before dark."

"Yes, yes," answered the Laird. "Let us have the climax to-night. Ha, ha, Seaton, you are a pleased man this day, eh? And you, Morgan, eh? All your plans coming to a head! Yes, yes, Roy, my lad. Fancy you and Marie living so close to all the family wealth and never guessing it. Ha, ha, ha! It's rich, that, rich."

"We'll want a couple of spades and a pick," said the practical Roy. "Come along, Morgan, let us find them."

Then Marie spoke for the first time.

"Hold, Roy!" she said, looking up curiously at her husband. "Is it not that this money is under our land?"

"If Dr Seaton is right in his reading of the cipher, it is," replied Roy. "But what has that got to do with it? We are all in league together to find the treasure. When it is found it will be time enough to think about the division of the spoil."

Marie drooped her eyes. I could have sworn that a shade of disappointment crossed her

face. It was as if she had wished to cause discord, and had failed. Laird Tanish heartily seconded his son's words.

"Ay, ay, Roy," he said. "Time enough when the gold is unearthed. Don't you worry about whom it belongs to, Marie, my lass."

Morgan and Roy went off to find the necessary tools. The rest of us were making towards the door to prepare for the excursion when I noticed that Roy's wife made no effort to join us.

"Are you not coming with us, Mrs Tanish?" I asked.

"But why?" she said with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "If it is that you find the money, you will bring it here. If there is nothing—I shall be saved the pain."

Laird Tanish looked at his daughter-in-law with an expression that I could not fathom. Then, going behind her chair, he placed his hand on her shoulder, bent over her, and murmured some words in her ear.

Marie shook her head slightly.

"I am fatigued. I shall await you here," she said.

For a moment the Laird looked as if he would pursue his usual course when crossed, and burst into a violent fit of rage. He controlled himself, however, with an obvious effort, and accepted Marie's refusal calmly.

"Very well, have it your own way," he said. "But you're going to miss a most exciting hour."

"But yes! That is why it is that I stay," replied Marie calmly. "I do not wish for your excitement—it might be too strong for me."

So we left her there at Hopeton, sitting at the tea-table with her cold face as inscrutable as marble, her fingers idly crumbling a fragment of bread.

I had forgotten—even if I had had the opportunity—to warn Marigold that Betty was waiting for us outside. The Laird saw her as soon as we came out. His face darkened, and again I feared a scene.

"And what might the doctor's daughter be wanting at Hopeton?" he demanded, looking at her with set face and lowered brows.

I felt it was up to me to take the brunt, if the outburst had to come.

"Miss Forbes is my promised wife," I said boldly. "What I know, she knows, and she is naturally interested in the sequel."

"So, Seaton! You've been treasure-hunting on your own, eh? Ha, ha! Let her come! Let her come! The more the merrier!"

At that moment Roy and Morgan appeared with the necessary tools, and nothing further was said of Betty's presence.

I looked at my watch as we set out for Blackdykes. It was just after half-past five, but the daylight is long in Scotland in July, and I thought we should have plenty of time for all that was to be done. I little guessed what lay before us ere another day should dawn.

Roy and his father led the way. Morgan hung back to have a word with me.

"Congratulations, Seaton, my boy," he said, giving my arm a squeeze. "You are some sticker. Dear, dear, I had mighty near given up prospecting for gold in this section. If it hadn't been for you we'd never have made good. Marigold has handed it out that you've abquired your own little prize-packet simultaneous. Gee! You are a lucky chap."

"So are you with Marigold," I answered, when I had thanked him for his words. "It is a great day."

"Yes," he agreed. "I shall claim Marigold as soon as the first dollar is turned up. So don't grudge your sweat when the digging begins, Seaton!"

It took us fully three-quarters of an hour to get to the wood upon the hillside, for though it was but two miles as the crow flies, it was considerably more by the paths across the country.

We walked in couples. The Laird had called Morgan to him, and they took the lead. Roy and his sister followed, while Betty and I—who were, after all, only spectators—brought up the rear. We had fallen some little way behind the others by the time they reached the border of the wood, for we were intent upon our own talk, which was of an intimate and personal nature.

As the others disappeared amongst the fir-trees we hurried forward, anxious to be present when the cairn was reached. Before we got to the clearing, however, we realised that something was amiss.

The voice of Laird Tanish was raised in boisterous laughter,—laughter that sounded—even to us who could not yet see his face—so unnatural and vicious that Betty instinctively caught my arm and clung to it.

We hurried into the clearing.

In the middle of it stood the Laird, leaning upon the handle of a spade, his raucous laughter still ringing among the trees. The others stood silent, looking, with dismay written plain upon their faces, at the ground before them. As my eyes followed theirs, and I realised at what they gazed, my heart gave a jump within me, and then seemed to stop at the shock of my disappointment.

There was no cairn in the clearing!

All around amongst the grass lay the stones of which it had been constructed. The Laird, with his evil grin, stood upon the edge of a roughly dug hole, and around him lay the loose black mould that had been excavated.

Some one had been before us!

I recalled the night when I had received that crashing blow upon my crown from a spade in the hands of Laird Tanish. I had but to glance at the evil expression of triumph and hate that gave to his face the look of a devil, in order to know who that *some one* had been. Nor was I the only one who guessed the truth, for a moment after Betty and I entered the glade Morgan, who seemed the most collected of

the party, spoke in his usual quiet manner.

"Dear, dear, dear, Squire! So you've jumped the claim and cleared the dust! Well, well! You might have saved us the tramp by a little chin-wagging before we set out."

"And lost the pleasure of seeing your mean little Yankee face drop!" bellowed the Laird, his laughter gone, and a look of concentrated cold hate changing his features almost beyond recognition. "Curse you—curse you all! I've lived for this. If that would-be clever ass, Seaton, had not worried the thing out, I'd have found some means of getting you here, to enjoy the look of disappointment on your greedy faces. I got the best of you all. You, Morgan, that thought you held all the trumps, and refused my just demand. You, Roy, thief and blackguard as you are, who meanly stole my promised wife when I could not look after my own. Ha, ha, ha! You, at least, will squirm before I've done with you. My very daughter, Marigold, intriguing behind my back with a paid servant, making clandestine appointments with the very man I most hate. Oh, you're all of you in it—all of you, and every one of you has got to suffer for the part he has played."

It was painful to listen to him, and even more so to watch his face. As he spoke of us in turn, each fresh phrase brought a deeper shade of hatred over his face, and if he had appeared a devil before he spoke, he was the very chief of the fiends ere he had finished.

"Now that I have you here," he continued, turning his eyes, bloodshot with rage, on each of us in turn, "Sit you down and listen to what I have to tell you. You shall hear what's come of the treasure and how you've each and all been beaten on the post. Sit you down."

None of us thought to disobey. For the moment we were under the spell of the evil face and raucous voice. Without a word we seated ourselves upon the grass, our eyes fixed upon the central figure, as he stood over the empty treasure-hole leaning on the spade, and eyeing us like some nightmare schoolmaster.

## CHAPTER XXV.

"It is you, Roy, that suffers most by my story," began the Laird, in a colder but more biting voice. "And—curse you for ever!—it is no more than your deserts. You dared to come between me and what I had set my mind on, and from the moment I heard of your crime I swore that you should pay the price. Did you think for one moment that I was satisfied with one blow at your face? Ha, ha, ha! You have little of the Tanish blood in your veins if you got no deeper into me than that.

"Maybe you'd like to know

who all but killed . . . your wife"—the words seemed to stick in his throat—"on this very spot I stand on? It was me! And if I had killed her outright it would have been no murder, but a just vengeance on her treachery to me. But she repented of it, Roy. She gave me her confidence in the end—more than she ever gave you, though you are her husband.

"Listen. When I returned from America, and found how I'd been cheated in my absence, I never once faltered in my determination to be revenged. I hung about Blackdykes at night to see how things were going with the happy pair. Ha, ha! Happy pair, indeed! I soon found that there was little love on Marie's side of the bargain. Three nights I watched her slip out alone to this very spot on which I stand. I saw her pick a few stones from the cairn each time, drop them amongst the trees, and then return to the farm. On the third night I guessed her secret, and in my just anger at her treachery"—it was strange how he insisted throughout on the "justice" of his own actions and the "treachery" of every one else—"I discharged my gun at her before I saw that there was a better and more subtle vengeance to be had. Fortunately I only wounded her slightly. Ay, Seaton, you never guessed that I was close by when you rushed forward to render first aid. You tried to deceive me from the first. You've been in league with my enemies from the day you came to Hepeton, but all along I've watched you and taken your measure.

"I thought my shot was a blunder; but it turned out a good move in the end, for it brought Marie over to my side. I had to wait weeks before I saw her again; but when she came again to the wood—as she did at last—I let a few nights pass, and then I stepped boldly forward and had it out with her. Oh, but she is a cunning one is Marie! She deceived me in her translation of the Flemish letter, for our ancestor's servant knew where the treasure was hidden, and his letter contained directions for finding it. Marie kept this information to herself, and when I was safely out of the country she married you, Roy. But not for love! No, no, don't you believe it! She married you in order to get close to the spot where the treasure was hidden. She never told you her secret—not her. If she had ever loved you she would have shared it with you; but she slipped out alone, night after night, to the wood, and laid the cairn flat.

"I watched her each night, until one by one she had lifted the heavy stones and spread them round the clearing. I was not fool enough to come out of hiding until she had finished the heavy work. Ha, ha, Seaton! You may pride yourself on your chess; but when it comes to real life, I can match my cunning against yours—ay, and beat the lot of you."

It was typical of the whole

bearing and actions of the man, this mean dealing with his fellow-conspirator. It made one shiver to hear him exult in his own meanness. I dared not look at the others, but sat half-fascinated with horror to hear a fellow-being gloat over what most men would give a fortune to hide.

"When I disclosed myself at last, Marie all but fainted with fear. I soon had the whole story out of her—how she used you, Roy, as a cloak to cover her theft of the treasure; how she got her directions from the letter of Hamish's servant, and faked up a false translation; how, little by little, she meant to get the treasure to a safe place, and then leave you for ever. Ha, ha, ha! A nice wife you sold your birthright to steal, and a pleasant recollection you'll have of your married life!"

At last I looked at Roy. I felt I must see how he was behaving under his ordeal. He sat with a dazed look upon his face, as though he only half comprehended what was being said. I saw that Marigold had come close to him and held his hand in hers, but I could swear he did not know it.

"When she saw that I had her in my power," continued the Laird pitilessly, "she soon agreed to share the treasure with me. It was the best she could do for herself. But I never meant she should have her share. Not me! And not a halfpenny of it will she ever lay hands on!

"It will gratify you all—self-seeking pack that you are—to hear that we found the treasure at this very spot I stand on. Hamish was no liar or boaster. The chest was packed to the brim with gold—guineas from England, louis from France, doubloons from Spain, dobras from Portugal; a mixed lot, but all good yellow gold that had been scraped together with infinite trouble, and all worth far more than its face value to-day. All mine, every farthing of it, and I defy the cleverest of you to deck me of a stiver.

"Ay, and better than the gold itself is to stand here and see your greedy faces blank with disappointment. What, Morgan! You with your cheap Yankee cunning to stand up against the like of me! You to call yourself a Tanish! Why, man, you are a living insult to the race. Generations of degenerate Yankee blood has diluted the Tanish strain until it produces a miserable double-dealing rat that would be a disgrace to the meanest family in the land. And you thought you could beat *me!* Did you think I didn't know you had sneaked into Kilbrennan, suborned my boy's tutor, and made underhand love to my daughter?

"Ay, Seaton, you thought you had managed to get Duncan under your thumb nicely! It never struck you that I had but to ask him and he would tell anything he knew. You didn't think it worth while to hide from him your visits to Forbes or your meetings with Morgan, but there's little you

did that I hadn't first-hand news of. And I played the lot of you up fine—I that was the doddering old fool you thought you could all turn round your fingers.

"You, Morgan, can go back to the States and paint your pictures, and thank God you go with a whole neck, for heaven knows it has been a trial to me to keep from twisting it. You would marry my daughter, would you? Now you know the meaning of my promise. You should have her when you found the treasure. Well, the treasure was found before ever the promise was made.

"As for you, Marigold, you will get back to Hopeton and stay there a shrivelled old maid until the day you drop dead with a sigh of relief from your misery. You have gone against me for months. You have plotted against me with this contemptible Seaton, who would crow over me because he can play chess better than I can—and not so very much better after all!"

It was curious how my mastery over him at chess had rankled in his diseased mind. It was for that alone, I believe, that he hated me, although no doubt he would have found some other grievance against me had this one been non-existent.

"You may think even now, some of you, that you can get the better of me," he went on. "Roy there might claim the treasure because it was found on his land. Let him! Even if he won, it would not give him back his wife's love—for he never had it. Morgan may put in a claim on the strength of Hamish's will,—I tell you the gold is treasure-trove, and if any one of you speaks the law will claim the lot. But could the law find it? Ha, ha! It's safely hidden, and none but Marie and me know where to look. There's no little pictures to follow for it now, and soon it will be where I alone can find it. Marie must pay for her treachery.

"You've heard what I have to say. You, Marigold, get back to Hopeton and reconcile yourself as best you can to the punishment you deserve." It did not even occur to him that his daughter might disobey his commands. "Roy, never let the sight of your accursed face cross my eyes again. I'll send your wife back to you if you want her—and if she'll go, which I very much doubt. She has squeezed you of all she wanted, and it is not likely that she will return.

"As for you, Morgan, you Yankee jackanapes, that fancied he could marry among the Tanishes, you will find your bags flung on the road outside the gates of Hopeton. What becomes of you matters nothing to me. You are well repaid for your treatment of me in the States. You can take your friend and catspaw Seaton with you when you go. He'll find a month's salary thrown out with his baggage, but like yourself he shall not darken my door again. If that doddering old quack Forbes likes to take him in

and marry him to his long-tongued red-headed girl, so much the better for my vengeance on the whole pack of you, for she'll harry the life out of him with her infernal clatter."

The small-minded rancour that filled him bubbled out at its lowest in this attack on poor Betty. But we all had to have our share, so Betty must suffer with the rest.

The Laird paused in his tirade and looked us over with his bloodshot eyes, glowering under his heavy grey eyebrows.

"I daresay this is the happiest day of my life," he said meditatively, his voice exhausted with his long effort of vituperation. "To have you all here under my thumb, cowed by the exposure of your own tricks and double-dealings, to see your greed for my gold disappointed by my own efforts, to have the man who stole my promised wife beaten and disillusioned—it's meat and drink to me, meat and drink."

His voice tailed off towards the end. The mad fury which he had held dammed throughout the past weeks had carried him along thus far by the force of its own torrent. As he stood still leaning upon the spade, he looked an older man than ever I had seen him—a worn done man to be pitied rather than disliked.

When he ceased to speak a dead silence reigned in the clearing. No one moved, no one spoke. Each awaited some word or action on the part of the other. I glanced around me and saw that Marigold was quietly weeping, with her head resting on her brother's shoulder. Roy's face told me nothing. It was cold and blank, like the face of the dead. Jabez Morgan, with hands clasped on his updrawn knees, looked at the Laird through his deceptive spectacles. It was hopeless to guess at his thoughts.

Early in this painful scene Betty had slipped her arm quietly through mine and drawn closer to me. Her head was bowed so that I could not see her face, but I could feel the trembling of the arm that rested in mine.

After all, it was the Laird himself who brought the scene to an end. With one last malignant look round those whom, in his distorted mind, he considered his victims, he straightened himself and cast aside the spade upon which he had leant throughout.

"Come, Marigold," he exclaimed harshly, "we are going back to Hopeton!"

Marigold looked up with a quick frightened glance, first at her father—then at Jabez Morgan.

"No, no, you must not go there. You are mine, Marigold," cried the latter, starting to his feet.

She shook her head sadly but firmly.

"He needs me most," she murmured in a faint voice which hardly reached me.

Again Morgan protested.

"Miss Forbes will take you

in until I can claim you as my wife," he pleaded. "You cannot go back there."

"I must," replied Marigold more firmly. "He needs me most."

"Ha, ha, ha!" broke in the Laird's harsh laughter. "You see how little power you have over a Tanish, Morgan. Come along, Marigold."

As he started across the clearing, his daughter rose with woeful face to follow him. Betty ran to her side and seized her arm.

"Come home with me, dear," she begged. "Even if it is only for to-night."

But Marigold gently drew her arm away.

"It is no use, Betty, dear. I am wanted at Hopeton. . . . There is little Duncan. I cannot leave him alone." She spoke in a low voice, but so firmly that Betty realised how futile it was to attempt to move her.

The delay irritated the Laird.

"Come on," he shouted. "I'll have no more parleying between my daughter and this crowd of sycophants. Get you home, girl, and thank God that your punishment for being a traitor to your own father is no worse. As for you," he turned and grinned maliguantly at those of us who remained—"as for you, may I never see one of your accursed faces again."

With that, almost driving his unfortunate daughter before him, he disappeared into the wood.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

What I have now to tell I did not see with my own eyes, but have pieced together from what I heard long afterwards. . . .

It was a very painful time for Marigold—that walk back to Hopeton. At first her father raved and stormed at her for what he was pleased to call her intrigue with Morgan, but gradually the reaction set in after his violent fit of passion, and he became so weak and tired that he was compelled to accept the support of his daughter's arm.

It took them quite an hour to reach the house, so that it must have been eight o'clock or a little later when they arrived.

At the thought of seeing Marie, and recounting to her the tale of his vengeance on his enemies, the Laird brisked up. He strode into the dining-room, calling loudly for his daughter-in-law. The room was empty. From room to room he strayed without coming upon her for whom he sought.

Returning to the hall, he shouted for Mrs Cunningham, the housekeeper. The old lady hurried from her room, with the look of anxiety that was always on her face when her master called for her.

"Where is my son's wife?" demanded the Laird.

"She's gane hame, Laird. She's been awa' this twa 'oor an' mair."

"Gone home! But she was to await me here!"

"She didna, then," said the old woman. "Ye hadna lang been awa' afore she went oot an' stairted the wee caur, an' she was awa' doon the drive in a meenit withoot a word tae a sowl."

"Curse her! Has she gone back to him, then, after all her promises!" exclaimed Laird Tanish, striding up and down the hall, his hands clasped behind his back and his head bent.

Marigold watched him from the doorway of the dining-room, fearful of what his next action might be. Suddenly he stopped short as though struck by an idea, gave a roar of mingled rage and dismay, and rushed from the house.

Marigold at once jumped to the conclusion that in this new access of anger he was going to Blackdykes to make more trouble between Marie and Roy. She hastily flung a dark cloak over her light summer frock, and hurried out after him. The sun had now set, and dusk was already beginning to gather. She could see her father far down the drive, going at a pace of which one would not have believed him capable after his recent exhaustion.

He turned down the main road until he came to the path leading to the fox-cover—the same spot to which I had followed him upon the night when he felled me with the spade—but instead of going straight up the path, he turned sharply to the right, parallel with the main road, but on the other side of the hedge.

Seeing the direction in which he was going, Marigold kept to the road, thus keeping the hedge as a screen between her father and herself. She could hear the sound of his footsteps and catch occasional glimpses of him through the hedge, and by keeping well behind there was little fear of her being observed.

After keeping in touch in this fashion for about a hundred yards, the sound of a rushing burn which flowed down the hillside and passed through a culvert beneath the road, drowned her father's footsteps, and she was compelled to trust to chance in her pursuit. She assumed that her father must cross the burn and appear upon the rising ground beyond, but as she did not see him she advanced cautiously to the culvert and peered over the parapet. The Laird was not to be seen.

Even as she was wondering what could have become of him, a deep muffled roar burst out beneath her very feet. Marigold was so startled that she ran back from the culvert and stood upon the solid road beyond. As she listened again, she recognised her father's voice, muffled yet magnified He was beneath the roadway, in the course of the burn, and from the tone of his voice Marigold judged that once again his rage had mastered him.

Not knowing but that he might be engaged in a conflict

with some unknown person, Marigold struggled through a gap in the hedge and rushed down the steep bank to the burn. She saw her father—inside the arch of the culvert—groping under the water, his sleeves submersed above the elbow, and as he groped he cursed, and bellowed almost like an animal in pain.

"Gone, gone! Curse her! Not a bag, not a solitary bag has she missed."

"Father, father!" faltered Marigold, "what is it? What is the matter?"

"That accursed woman!" answered the Laird, too preoccupied to be surprised at his daughter's presence. "How could she know it was here! I never gave her a hint. Night after night I removed as much as I could carry, and hid the bags here, beneath the culvert. It was a grand scheme, Marigold, for one dark night I could bring the car just overhead, and be off with the whole treasure long before she guessed it. But she must have followed me, curse her, and found the hiding-place. Who would have believed that a pale-faced chit like her would have had such devilish cunning? But I'll have it back—ay, if I have to tear the house down to get at her!"

He scrambled out from underneath the culvert and, with Marigold following close in his track, climbed up the bank and out upon the road. There he seemed for a moment to hesitate.

"If she thinks to share with Roy, I'll be the death of them both," he muttered. "But I doubt it, I doubt it! She's not the woman to share what she can keep to herself."

He stood in the roadway thinking and muttering to himself—then, coming suddenly to a decision, he started off at a sharp pace back to Hopeton.

Marigold, keeping close beside him, heard him call for the car to be brought round, and saw him wrap himself up warmly as if for a long run. She hastened to get her own motor-coat, for she did not mean that he should leave her sight.

When the car came to the door, Laird Tanish sent back the driver and himself took the wheel. Marigold made to step in after him, but he pushed her back roughly and slammed the door.

"No, no!" he said. "You stay behind. For all I know you may just want to spy on me—and, whether or no, there may be that done this night that it were better you did not see."

The engine was running. In a moment the car was off down the drive, leaving Marigold standing upon the steps of Hopeton.

. . . . . .

When Laird Tanish and Marigold left the clearing, those of us who were left behind stood silently watching them until they were hidden from sight amongst the undergrowth.

Morgan was the first to break the spell that had been over us for so long.

"Dear, dear, dear!" he exclaimed. "What a man! A

thousand years ago he would have been credible, but to-day! Seaton, I'm real sorry I've let you in for this, but how could I tell? I ask you—would any reasonable being have believed that such——"

Seeing the look on my face, he paused and let his eyes follow mine.

It was Roy. It was sacrilege to talk in the presence of agony such as his. It seemed as if his brain had been numbed by the disclosure of his wife's deceit, and that now it had begun to resume its functions. All that he had heard—rendered doubly bitter by his father's rancour and exultation—swept over him in a flood, breaking down the barriers of self-control, leaving him a trembling and broken man, shaken by dry sobs that it was a misery to hear.

She had never loved him! Therein lay the bitterness of it all. The deceit, the treachery, would have mattered not at all, had only love for him been in her heart. But the cruel hard words of his father had driven that illusion away for ever. . . .

We could not stand and gape at grief like his. I took Betty's cold hand in mine and led her to the farthest corner of the clearing, Morgan following behind. There we spoke together, low-voiced, of what was to be done.

"Can we do nothing to help him?" said Betty brokenly, her dear warm heart aching at the sorrow of it.

"Nothing," I murmured in reply. "Let him have a little time to recover his self-control before we speak to him."

We waited silently, for there was nothing to be said. It began to grow dark and gloomy there in the wood where night fell faster than in the open country. We waited with our backs to Roy, that we might not spy upon his weakness, and by-and-by we heard him coming to us. We turned to meet him. Morgan placed his hand upon the stricken man's shoulder in friendly fashion.

"What is to be done now, Roy?" he asked very quietly.

"I must see her . . . at least once more." He spoke slowly and quietly, as though with an effort.

"Not to-night, Roy, for God's sake," said Morgan beseechingly. "Enough has been said for one day. Let it lie over. You'll see things clearer to-morrow."

Roy passed his hand across his brow in a dazed fashion, and shook his head.

"I must see her," he repeated.

"Come, let us take you home to Blackdykes," said Morgan, taking his arm as he might that of a child.

"Home!" Roy threw back his head and laughed harshly at the darkening blue sky. It was a laugh that was not good to hear.

Yet he permitted himself to be led along the narrow path and out of the wood. Betty and I followed behind. I was in somewhat of a quandary. A feeling of delicacy impelled me to turn and go back towards Kilbrennan, but, on the other

hand, I had much to talk of with Morgan, and did not wish to lose sight of him. So Betty and I continued to follow, expecting that when we reached the farm Morgan would leave Roy and return with us.

The path from the wood brought us into the carriage-drive leading to the farmhouse, about a hundred yards away from the house itself. I heard the sound of a motor-engine as we approached, and on rounding a bend in the road saw Roy's little two-seater standing in front of the house. Almost at the same moment Marie came out of the doorway carrying a heavy bag, which she placed in the car.

Roy must have seen her at the same moment, for he stopped dead in the roadway and stared ahead. The rest of us waited to see what he would do.

Marie seated herself in the car, slipped in the clutch, and started down the drive towards us. It was fated that these two should meet.

She saw us as she drew near, and I fancied I could read in her face the determination to go straight on. But it was not to be. Before she reached him Roy stepped right in front of the car, and, unless she had been willing to run him down, she was compelled to put the brakes on. The car came to a stop within a few feet of him. Marie sat at the steering-wheel with pale expressionless face, her eyes fixed upon her husband.

Roy looked at her in silence. For a moment that seemed hours no word was spoken.

"Why is it that you stop me?" demanded Marie at last, with cold and dispassionate voice.

Roy struggled for words.

"I want . . . to know——" he said, and stopped as though incapable of articulation.

"Assuredly you know enough. Has not the old man, your father, told you all that it needs for you to know?"

He shook his head.

"No, no!" he cried. "Tell me the truth. He may have lied. He wanted to hurt me . . . to cut me to the heart . . . he would tell any lie to wound me. Tell me that he lied, Marie, and that you love me still."

He held his arms out towards her in this forlorn hope, but there was no response in that cold pale face, no love in the hard black eyes that looked contemptuously upon his weakness.

"If he, your father, has told you that I have no love for you, then he has spoken true." Marie leant forward over the wheel, and though she spoke coldly and cuttingly, she showed more animation than I had seen in her. As she went on, the words came faster and more incisive. "If he told you that I have never loved you, he has still spoke true. If he told you that your dull Scottish nature is hateful to me, and that I would not have lived by you for one day had I not desired to steal the gold of your ancestor, he still spoke true. I hate you all, you stupid people of Scotland, but most of all do I hate you, Roy Tanish.

"Stand aside!"

The car started, and gathered speed. Roy would assuredly have been knocked down and run over had not Morgan clutched him by the arm and dragged him out of the way.

As she passed us, Marie turned and waved a gloved hand, daintily, coolly, with a faint derisive smile upon her white hard face.

"Marie! Marie! Come back!" shouted Roy wildly, as he suddenly realised that she was going out of his life for ever.

The car sped on down the drive.

"Stop! Stop!"

With outstretched arms the stricken man rushed madly after, shouting as he ran. The car gathered speed as it went, and rapidly increased its distance; but still he ran, hopelessly pursuing what could never be his.

"Stop him, Bob," exclaimed Betty, to whom this scene was heartrending.

Morgan and I rushed after him. On the main road we found him staring wildly after the car, which was already a mere speck in the distance. Even as we looked it swung round and disappeared into the main road to Glasgow.

We were startled from our absorption by a loud "honk, honk," and the rush of a heavy car behind us. We started quickly to the roadside, dragging Roy with us.

Then, turning, we saw Laird Tanish, hatless and with eyes bloodshot and bulging, drawing up before us.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

If we had not already guessed the reason of Marie's flight, the sight of the Laird's face, even without his words, would have given us the clue. The look of triumph had gone, and rage and dismay had taken its place.

"It's gone, all gone!" he shouted at us, forgetting in his obsession that we were the very people whom he had cursed and derided such a short time before. "Where is she? I'll have it back if I follow her to hell! If you are hiding her, Roy, I'll pull the house down stone by stone to find her."

"She is beyond your reach," said Roy quietly, looking his father steadily in the face. "You will never see her nor your accursed treasure again."

It is almost incredible that after his contemptuous treatment of me in the wood, the Laird should now turn to me for help. Yet so it was. So wrapt up was he in his own selfish desire that no hint of shame or confusion interfered with his actions.

"Seaton," he cried, turning to me, "you must know where she has gone, or at least if she has been here. Come along, man, tell me quickly. You shall not be the loser by it in the end."

By this time I hated the mere thought of the Laird and his treasure. To me, the

tragedy of Roy's broken life was the only thing that mattered. It was for him alone to decide what his father should be told. So I made no answer to his demand except to shake my head slightly.

"Curse you!" he cried. "You are all in league against me to let her escape. But she shall not escape."

His face cleared and his eyes lit up, as an idea crossed his mind.

"What were you all looking up the road for, then? Ah! I see through it. She has taken the Glasgow road! And she's not long gone either. I'll have her yet, in spite of you all."

"No!" cried Roy wildly. "You must not follow."

But his words gave the Laird the confirmation he required.

"Stand back," he shouted, and made to start the car.

Roy jumped upon the foot-board and reached over, but he was too late. The clutch was in, and the heavy car began to move.

"Let go, you fool," shouted the Laird, for Roy had a grip upon the steering-wheel that prevented his free use of it.

"Never," replied Roy. "Stop the car, and let her go."

By now the car was moving forward with increasing speed. Roy stood on the foot-board, leaning over the door, and clutching at the wheel. His father raised his disengaged hand and struck him repeatedly full in the face.

"For God's sake, Seaton, do something," shouted Morgan at my ear.

There was no time to think. The car was already moving rapidly away from us, but I could not let these two unnatural enemies leave us in the midst of a struggle. I rushed down the road and took a flying leap at the collapsed hood which projected in the rear. I succeeded in pulling myself up and over, and tumbled pell-mell into the tonneau. I was just in time. The car was now putting on speed rapidly.

"Roy, Roy," I shouted, gathering myself up and leaning over towards the struggling men. "You will wreck the car. Let go, for God's sake!"

My voice seemed to bring him to his senses. He looked up at me, his face bleeding from his father's blows, and pale with unnatural excitement.

"He must not go alone," he exclaimed desperately.

"Get in then," I cried. "And we'll both go with him."

As soon as Roy let go his hold on the steering-wheel, the Laird paid no further attention to him, but devoted himself to the management of the car. Roy clambered into the tonneau beside me, but he was not content with that. He must be in front, close to the driver. He stepped out on the foot-board on the opposite side and made his way forward. A moment later he had seated himself by his father's side.

It was the strangest situation. The two men—father and son—their interests diametrically opposed, sat side by side in the gathering night, silent and determined, rushing

at top-speed towards an unknown goal. Behind them, myself—a mere spectator, free from the passions that blinded them to the dangers of their course, with heart in mouth as we swung round the acute bends, or rushed the almost precipitous gradients of the narrow road. We were running without lamps, and I hardly dared to look ahead.

It was obvious that if we had chosen the right road we must overtake the fugitive before many miles had gone by. The little two-seater was not good for more than about thirty, while the Laird must have been getting the best part of sixty out of his big Rolls-Royce. I felt a vast relief when the moon rose round and clear, and threw some light upon our wild journeying. Yet though the moonlight helped in the main, it made the darkness blacker as we rushed into some shadowed hollow amongst the hills, or ran under the gloom of a wooded stretch of road—and never a word was uttered by either of the passionate men upon whose blank silhouetted backs I gazed with a strange presentiment of disaster.

A sudden shout of exultation from the Laird brought me excitedly to my feet. He had sighted the quarry!

We were upon the crest of a long hill. Across the valley ahead we could see the white road climbing the opposing slope, and faintly outlined in the moonlight—the little two-seater, plodding its way upward.

Laird Tanish vented a bellow of exultant laughter.

"I've got her! I've got her!" he shouted.

But Roy sat silent and motionless. I could not see his face, and vainly sought some clue to his feelings in the humped lines of his back.

We rushed down that hill and across the valley at break-neck speed. Luck must have been on our side, for stretches of the road were in the deepest shadow, yet Laird Tanish never for a moment slackened his pace.

When he reached the upward slope, he cursed furiously at the reduced speed, muttering to himself like the madman I sometimes thought he must be. When we reached the summit, another savage yell of triumph told me that we had gained upon the quarry. Yes, there was the two-seater, barely half a mile ahead. One could just see it as it crossed the lighter patches of the road.

Then Roy, who had come to a decision, spoke.

"You will take your accursed treasure, and let her go," he said—not questioningly, but definitely as an order.

"I promise nothing. She is a robber, a thief! I'll have no mercy on her," shouted his father savagely.

"She is my wife. I claim her," replied Roy. He spoke calmly, his voice completely under control, but as a man whose determination was unalterable.

"Be damned to all your claims," retorted the Laird, his eyes intent on the car upon which we were rapidly gaining.

But that would not do for

Roy. He leant across and clutched at the steering-wheel.

"Promise that you will take your treasure and let her go—or I will dash the car into the roadside," he cried, and I could see enough of his face to know that he meant every word of his threat.

For me, seated helpless in the tonneau, it was no pleasant position. I was at the mercy of the passions of two men to whom, for all practical purposes, I did not exist. A cry for mercy would not be heard, or if heard would not be listened to. They were both far beyond all considerations of reason.

"Have it your own way," replied the Laird. "I'll let her go—but much good will it do you."

Roy released his hold, and sat back in his place. To his father, nothing mattered but the money. He was prepared to agree to anything did he but get back his vanished treasure.

The car roared on its perilous way. At times the two-seater was plain ahead, again it had disappeared in the black shadows or vanished round some bend in the road—only to reappear closer to us than before, and each time, as he saw how we had gained, Laird Tanish shouted aloud in his delight.

By this time Marie had realised that she was pursued. More than once I saw her glance quickly backward over her shoulder—for we were now near enough to distinguish her clearly. Another thing showed that she had observed us—we did not gain quite so quickly on her. Realising that we were in chase, she had let out her little car to its utmost, in a desperate effort to escape. It was hopeless, of course, for at the best she could not do much more than a mile to our two, yet it made Laird Tanish curse viciously when he ceased to gain so quickly.

Gradually we crept up, until in the bright moonlight every detail of the car ahead stood out as clear as in the day. Soon we were separated by a bare hundred yards—fifty yards—twenty yards!

"Stop, damn you, stop!" roared the Laird.

Whether or not his voice carried amid the roar of the motors, I do not know, but Marie kept straight on. Again and again he shouted to her, but without effect. We drew nearer and nearer — fifteen yards—ten yards—but still she swept on, oblivious to the shouts and curses that were hurled at her.

I stood up, clinging to the front of the tonneau, staring ahead almost terror-struck by the speed and the excitement of the chase. A deadweight of presentiment hung over me—a presentiment of disaster and death that paralysed me beyond articulation.

We were within five yards of the rear of the two-seater before the full realisation of the Laird's madness swept over me—and almost at the same moment Marie, too, guessed his damnable intent.

She turned and looked back

over her shoulder. The full light of the moon played on her dead-white face and picked out every contour of it. We were so close that she could read the Laird's purpose in his face. As its full import came home to her, an awful change came over her pallid features. Fear—the crude bald fear of death—changed her almost beyond recognition. With one wild shriek of terror she turned her face from us. It was the last time I was to look upon it.

Roy, too, had guessed his father's intention.

"My God!" he cried, and sprang to his feet.

For there was no attempt made by the Laird to draw alongside or pass the pursued car. In his mad rage he had forgotten even his own aim. At the risk of losing the treasure he sought—of wrecking his own car—of throwing away his life, to say nothing of Roy's or mine—he was deliberately steering into the two-seater, hatred and revenge being the only emotions left to him.

We were on a downward slope. The scene, with the white moonlight playing on it, is as clear to me as though I stood there now. A little way ahead, at the bottom of the hill, was a bridge over a trickling burn, and there, too, the road curved off to the left.

"My God!" cried Roy, as he sprang to his feet. "Father, father—pull out while there is time."

A wild laugh from the Laird was his only answer.

Roy sprang at the steering-wheel. The Laird, anticipating his action, rose and faced him, with one hand still on the wheel.

There was a blow, a struggle that seemed to me to last hours, but which must have been over in a moment, and I caught one swift glimpse of the two-seater on my left as we swept past it.

The same moment the parapet of the bridge loomed big ahead. I saw two black struggling figures towering above me, locked in each other's arms—there was a crash as if the world had come to an end . . . and that is the last I remember.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"He's no deid, lass, but I doot . . ."

I opened my eyes to a glimpse of gorgeous colour. I seemed to see the face of Betty, pale and tear-stained, bending over me, and sunlight playing on her chestnut hair. It was only a glimpse, and then a great pain swept over me, swallowed me up, and carried me down, down to oblivion. . . .

When I again recovered consciousness I did not know whether moments or days had passed. I did not care. So weak was I that I lay—aware of my existence indeed—but powerless to raise my eyelids to examine my surroundings. I could hear faint movements around me, and once or twice a whispered word. How long I might have remained in this

state I cannot tell, but I was aroused from it by a new sensation, so thrilling that it would almost have brought me back from the grave.

As I lay with closed eyes, conscious, but no more, I became aware of a faint agreeable sensation upon my forehead, and a warmth of air upon my face. Even as I speculated weakly on the source of these sensations, something soft and warm touched my lips, and lay closer and still more closely against them. The gentle pressure increased, and my lips pursed half-consciously to meet it. My heart beat more strongly, my breath came faster, and I opened my eyes slowly, almost fearfully, lest I should break the spell that was aweaving in my clouded mind.

The dear brown eyes of Betty were the first sight that greeted mine. It was the warmth of her sweet lips that had roused me from my lethargy. As she saw my eyes open upon hers she started up with a cry of joy; but seeing, no doubt, the look of disappointment on my face, she pressed her lips again to mine, and her warm tears rolled down my cheeks.

"Hoots, lassie," said the voice of Dr Forbes from somewhere beyond the range of my vision, "dinna gie up hope. We'll pu' him through yet."

Betty raised her beautiful head.

"We have, Dad, we have!" she said brokenly, and it did me good to hear the joy that mingled with her sobs. "He is conscious at last."

I tried to speak, but the words would not come, so instead I smiled weakly. Then I felt the old doctor's hand upon my brow, and saw his wholesome genial face looking down at me.

"Guid lad!" he said in a subdued voice. "Lie quait an' dinna be fashed. You're a' richt noo. We'll mak' a man o' ye yet."

For days I lay weak and speechless, but happy. I could watch Betty as she sat by my bedside or moved about the room quietly, busy with the linen or the medicine bottles. I have since been told that it is a marvel my eyes did not fall out, so much did I turn and twist them in my efforts to miss no movement of my beloved.

I recovered my speech slowly, but at first they would not let me talk. Gradually, however, I regained my strength, and at last came a happy day when I could speak with Betty without fear of being "hushed" to silence.

"The Dad says it's all right," Betty told me with a happy smile. "So long as we don't discuss controversial subjects. You know what that means, Bob. You must ask no questions about . . . about the past."

As the one thing I wanted to hear about most was the past, that put somewhat of a damper upon me. I think, however, that the doctor soon saw that I was really beginning to worry about things, and that ignorance was more likely to retard my recovery than knowledge.

He came into my room one day soon after, and sat down by my bedside.

"Weel, Bob—for I doot ye'll ha'e tae be Bob tae me hereafter," he began in friendly fashion, and this was his first reference to the new relations between Betty and myself. "I daursay there's things ye wud like fine tae ken?"

"There are, Doctor," I answered. "But first, tell me—has Betty spoken to you of—of——"

"Ay, ay, lad, dinna fash yoursel'," he interrupted kindly, to save me the embarrassment of an avowal. "Betty has telt me that you want her. She micht dae waur, ye ken. Dinna you fash yoursel' aboot that."

It may seem a grudging acceptance of a son-in-law, that "she micht dae waur," but the doctor was an undemonstrative old Scotsman, and the kindly pressure of his hand on mine meant more than the words.

"You'll be wantin' tae ken the end o' your adventure, I'm thinkin'?" he asked, quickly changing the subject.

"Yes," I answered eagerly. "What has become of Roy, and the Laird, and Marie? Where is Morgan? And——"

"Yin at a time—yin at a time," the doctor interrupted, smiling at my eagerness. "I'd best juist tell ye the story in my ain words.

"Puir Roy!" He paused to let these words sink into my mind, and thus break the news more gently. "He was a fine lad, was Roy. It was a peety he got mixed up wi' that furrin woman. . . . He was deid when they found him. Him an' his faither—baith. Hoo it was that you escapit alive, Guid kens. But there wisna muckle life in you, come tae think on it. The caur loupit doon intae the bed o' the burn, a maitter o' fifty feet or mair, an' smashed itsel' tae smithereens again' the stanes. They brocht you back for deid, but Betty wud ha'e it that there was life in you, an' sure eneuch she was richt."

"And Marie?" I asked.

"I ken nowt o' her. Her disappearance wisna brocht up at the inquiry. The twa things werena connected. But she hisna been seen since."

"Then the Hopeton treasure is lost?" I exclaimed.

"So I understand frae Betty. I only ken what she has telt me aboot the treasure. The furrin woman is clear awa' wi' it—o' that you may be shair."

I lay silent, thinking of what he had told me.

"Perhaps it is as well," I said at last. "It has caused enough trouble, and I doubt if it will bring much happiness to Marie. By the way, how long have I been ill?"

"Mair ner a month," replied Dr Forbes, to my astonishment.

"And what of Morgan—where is he now?"

"Efter everything was settled up, an' you were oot o' danger, he went awa' for a while, but he's back in the toon again, an' anxious tae see you, as sune as I'll gi'e him leave. In fact, he's been ca'in' me jailer, an' kidnapper, an'

siclike, for the last week or mair. If you think it's no' ower muckle for you, we micht let him in the morn, juist lang eneuch tae speir the time o' day."

So next day I saw Morgan's beaming spectacles once again. He was unaffectedly delighted to see me, and stood rubbing his hands and exclaiming, for an unconscionable time—

"Dear, dear, dear! This is a great day, Seaton. That jailer of yours is a holy terror. I should have seen you a week ago, but for his rules and regulations. He's worse than a New York hall-porter."

I smiled upon him and let him talk.

"Well, well, it's all over now, thank God, but I can't look at you lying there without blaming myself for your troubles. I got you into all this mess, Seaton, with these damned little pictures. Even at the last, I cried to you to do something, and landed you in for that unholy smash. Nobody but you knows what really happened that night. Was it an accident?"

Now I knew, as surely as I knew anything on this earth, that Roy had deliberately pulled the car across the road to save his false wife. He did it with a full knowledge of what would be the end, but—what good would come from speaking of it.

"Yes," I answered. "A pure accident. . . . The light was bad. . . . The Laird was driving. . . . He did not see the bend in the road."

"You had a marvellous escape. Dear, dear, dear, there wasn't a sporting chance in a million that you'd be alive—yet here you are, as full of beans as a pod."

"What of Marigold?" I asked.

"She is recovering," answered Morgan. "It was a terrible shock to her, but she is getting over it. Seaton, my boy, I've overcome all her objections at last, and she's going to marry me and come with me to the States. We shall take young Duncan with us, and let Hopeton until he grows up."

"The best thing you could do," I agreed heartily. "Take her right away to fresh surroundings. She could never be happy here."

. . . I was well enough to be at Marigold's wedding. It was a very quiet wedding, but looking at the faces of the bride and bridegroom I knew that it would turn out a happy one.

I have proved myself right, too, for Betty and I have twice journeyed to the States and visited the Morgans, and a happier household I have never seen—with one exception. But then, there is only one Betty.

Morgan, even now, will sometimes grow apologetic about the troubles he let me in for, and put them all down to those "damned little pictures." I never agree with him.

"You mustn't grumble, Morgan," I tell him. "We followed the little pictures, you know. The tragedy would have come just the same without them, but not the joy that is ours to-day."

# BEFORE THE UNION: GRATTAN'S PEOPLE.

BY J. A. STRAHAN.

BOTH Swift and Grattan were Irish patriots, though two men more different in their nature and in their outlook on life it would be difficult to imagine. Swift was an Anglo-Saxon in everything except birth; Grattan was an Irish Celt in everything except name. Swift was sparing in words, but you always know what he means; Grattan was profuse in words, but sometimes does not know what he means himself. Swift was a hater of mankind who, during his life, devoted a third of his income, and at his death left all his fortune, in charities to men. Grattan was a lover of mankind who, during his life, spent more than his income on himself, and at his death left little fortune for anybody.

Swift's active life occupied the first part of the first half of the eighteenth century; Grattan's the second part of the second half of the eighteenth century. Save in one respect, the Irelands of those two periods were as different as Swift and Grattan.

The one respect in which the two Irelands were the same was the misery of the majority of the population—the common enemy of Swift's, the dangerous Papists of Grattan's time. In his 'Modest Proposal for Utilising the Children of Poor People in Ireland,' Swift describes their condition in his his day: "It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town [Dublin], or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms." And in recommending that the children should be eaten, he indicates clearly enough the cause of their awful poverty. "I grant," he says, "this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children." In Grattan's day their condition is described by Lord Clare: "I say it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable tenantry. I know that the unhappy tenants are ground to powder by relentless landlords." And again: "This island is supposed to contain three millions of inhabitants. Of these, two live like the beasts of the field upon a root picked out of the earth, almost without hovels for shelter or clothes for covering." It is to be noted that Swift and Clare were both Tories of the highest type: the men who were fighting for "the people's rights" had, so far as I can discover, no more bowels of compassion for the physical miseries of the farmers and labourers than had Mr

Bright and his fellow Radicals for the physical miseries of the factory hands.

When Englishmen endow the stage Irishman with an inexhaustible fund of reckless gaiety, they are really attributing to the Celt peasant the characteristic of the Saxon landlord. The Celt in Ireland has had, during the last seven centuries, plenty of cause for recklessness but very little for gaiety; and every one who knows him as he is recognises as his most noticeable characteristic a habitual melancholy — which, the late Lord Beaconsfield once said, was due to his proximity to the melancholy ocean. A more likely cause is his long unhappiness. It is, as a rule, only when he has, as they say in Ireland, "drink taken" that he is gay; and in the eighteenth century that gaiety took usually the rather disagreeable form of faction-fighting. The best description of the faction-fights, which for generations followed every country fair, is given by the late Mr W. R. Le Fanu in his 'Seventy Years of Irish Life.' Dealing with the fights in County Limerick between the Coffeys and the Reaskawallahs, he says they did not begin with one man trailing his coat on the ground and daring any one to tread on it. They began by a man "wheeling," as they called it, for his party: that is, he marched up and down flourishing his blackthorn, and shouting — "Here is Coffey aboo against Reaskawallahs! Here is Coffey aboo — who dar strike a Coffey?" "I dar!" shouted a Reaskawallah. "Here's Reaskawallah aboo!" And then the struggle began. The parish priest and his curate would ride among the fighting men, striking right and left with their whips; but the struggle would not end until the weaker faction was driven from the field, leaving a few dead and many dangerously wounded behind them. This was the form Irish Celtic hilarity took in the eighteenth century. One of Daniel O'Connell's best services to his country was putting a stop to it by denouncing it as unpatriotic and a shame to Ireland.

It was during the agony of that awful eighteenth century that the Catholic priest acquired that authority over the Irish peasant which makes him the real ruler of the country till this day. As Swift says, the landlords were devouring the tenantry; as Clare says, they were grinding them to powder. In their misery the only person who brought them help or hope was the priest. At first he did so at the risk of murder or mutilation; but whatever the dangers he had to face, he never failed them in their hours of sorrow, sickness, and death.

"Who, in the winter's night,
Soggarth aroon,[1]
When the cold blast did bite,
Soggarth aroon,

[1] Priest dear.

Came to my cabin-door
And on my earthen floor
Knelt by me, sick and poor,
Soggarth aroon."

The difference between the Ireland of Swift's and the Ireland of Grattan's day lay not among the Celtic Irish but among the Anglo-Irish. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Anglo-Irish, whether English or Scots, landowners or farmers or flax-spinners, were one people with a common hatred of the Celtic Irish—"the common enemy." At the end of it they were two peoples—a farming and flax-spinning people in the North, who were Scots and had become very discontented, and a landowning and roistering people, scattered throughout the whole country, who were very contented and had become Irish.

The farming and flax-spinning people in the North need hardly be considered. Save that they were much less poor and were much more independent, they were in nearly the same position as the Celtic, or as they were now called the Catholic, Irish. They had practically nothing to do with the government of the country; and, since their Volunteers failed to get Grattan's Parliament reformed, they regarded it with hatred and contempt. The landowning and roistering people, on the other hand, owned not merely the land but everything else in the country which was worth owning. They made all the laws, filled all the places, and pocketed all the taxes. They had ceased to talk of English Ascendancy—indeed, they were bitterly opposed to it—but they talked much about Protestant Ascendancy. This did not mean that they continued to persecute Catholics—in fact they had become very tolerant; it merely meant that they were Protestants, and that they were determined to maintain their own ascendancy—in other words, to keep what they already possessed, all the powers, places, and profits in the country.

Considering what human nature is this is not to be wondered at. If all the rest of the population was steeped in poverty and gloom, they were rolling in riches and gaiety. Some one has said that no one ever fully felt the joy of life except a French nobleman of the age before the French Revolution. I am not so sure of that. At any rate, the Irish nobleman of the age before the Irish Union had a very jolly time of it. Like his French brother, he built stately mansions among the mud-cabins of his tenantry, feasted while they starved, forced them to make roads for his convenience, and whipped them off them when they got in his way. He drank, diced, danced, and duelled to his heart's content, without giving a thought as to whether they were living or dying. The French nobleman came to a sudden end about the close of the eighteenth century; so would have the Irish nobleman but for the help of England, whose interference in his affairs he so deeply detested.

These were the glorious days of Dublin. As some one has

said, never had so poor a country so fine a capital. The Government spent its spare revenue in erecting magnificent public buildings much too big for their business. The gentry, from the Duke of Leinster down, mortgaged their estates to build fine town mansions. Their sons, disdaining the Oxford and Cambridge to which they now resort, went in a body to Trinity College, where they led very merry lives. Being the sons of noblemen and gentlemen, they were above the law. If an actor offended them, they wrecked his theatre; if a tradesman dunned them, they wrecked his shop. The authorities never ventured to oppose them; and the first check which was given to these sort of proceedings was by a chemist in College Street. They were wrecking his shop when he, instead of running away as other tradesmen did, appeared at the window with a pair of pistols and proceeded to shoot; whereupon the students, who never anticipated this sort of reception, for a change themselves ran away. This chemist was named John Giffard, the grandfather of Lord Halsbury, and the man whom Grattan, with better rhetoric than sense, denounced as a coward.

The life which these young noblemen led at Trinity and afterwards in Dublin was joyous enough, but it did not conduce to their prosperity or longevity. Sir Jonah Barrington has noted that almost every one of his College contemporaries who afterwards rose to distinction had entered the University as a sizar—that is, as one so poor as to have to earn his education by acting as a servitor to the other students. And yet it cannot be doubted that there was great ability among these young noblemen and gentlemen, when we remember that the great Duke of Wellington, though not educated at Trinity, led in his youth while in Dublin the same life as they did, and might, had not fortune removed him to another sphere, have been, and in fact nearly was, ruined by that life.

Gaming was the vice which nearly ruined the youthful Wellesley; but drinking was the vice which destroyed most of the young men. Of course drinking was also the commonest vice in the England of that time too; but among the better classes in England little but port and claret was consumed, while among the same classes in Ireland whisky entered largely into their potations—an intoxicant then almost unknown out of Scotland and Ireland. In Dublin many societies were founded for the express purpose of drinking. The most celebrated of these was "The Monks of the Screw," of which Curran was prior, and to which many of the most distinguished men of the age belonged. A statuette of St Patrick graced the sideboard, and the members were robed in monk's gowns, and in a song written by Curran were

contained the directions of the saint to the monks. One verse of this will be sufficient: some of them are unprintable.

"My children, be chaste till you're tempted—
While sober, be wise and discreet—
And humble your bodies with fasting
Whene'er you've got nothing to eat."

Such being the principles of this club, Curran had the assurance, years after it had ceased to exist, to refer to it in a speech to Lord Avonmore, Lord Chief Baron, who was one of its original members, in this way: "Yes, my lord, we can remember those nights with no other regret than that they can return no more. For—

'We spent them not in toys, or lust, or wine,
But search of deep philosophy,
Wit, eloquence, and poesy—
Arts which I loved; for they, my friend, were thine.'"

Evidently in Curran's opinion "The Monks of the Screw" was not a club of what were then called "hard-geers." What hard-going really was one can learn from a little tale told by Sir Jonah Barrington.

When Sir Jonah went home from College one winter, he found that hunting had been stopped by snow and frost. His elder brother, however, and fellow-sportsmen were determined not to waste the time on that account. They took possession of an empty outhouse, installed there a cook and a piper. Then they had a heifer killed and hung up in it, and a cask of claret and some gallons of whisky brought in and a great fire lighted. All the doors and windows were then closed; Sir Jonah and the sportsmen sat down on the straw-covered floor; the cook cut off great steaks from the cow and flung them on the gridiron; the claret cask was broached and hot water was boiled for the whisky; and the piper began to pipe. When the steaks were ready for consumption they were thrown on plates and each man began to eat and drink, and continued doing so until he tumbled back in the straw and went asleep. When he awoke, he resumed eating and drinking, and continued doing so till he again tumbled back in the straw and went asleep. This continued till the frost was over, when most of the cow and all the claret and whisky had disappeared.

There were three classes of gentry in the country: half-mounted gentlemen, gentlemen every inch of them, and gentlemen to the backbone. The first class consisted of the smaller squireens and larger freehold farmers; the second of the larger squireens and smaller squires; the third of the great landowners. The half-mounted gentlemen might do a little in the way of trade, but the other two classes and all their descendants held trade in abhorrence. The only callings their younger sons would think of were the Army, the Church, and the Bar; and of these the Bar was the favourite, as it was

the chief road to places of the profitable kind.

No doubt another circumstance which contributed to the popularity of the Bar as a profession for younger sons was that no severe study was needed to attain success in it: a sound knowledge of the law was not half as useful as a straight aim with the pistol, and all the sons of the gentlemen every inch of them and the gentlemen to the backbone had that by nature. I have often wondered what the late Lord Collins, Master of the Rolls in England and afterwards a Lord of Appeal, thought of the story told of his ancestor, Mr Justice Henn.

The story is that once when Mr Justice Henn was going circuit, a point of law arose in a case before him. Counsel on the one side alleged that the law on the point was so and so, and the counsel on the other side alleged it was the very reverse; and then they both asked for his decision.

"How can I decide it," he exclaimed angrily, "when you both are contradicting each other?" Then turning to the registrar, who was always the bosom friend of the Judge, he said, "I wish to God, Billy Harris, I knew what the law on this point really is." "My lord," replied Billy earnestly, "if I possessed that knowledge, I protest to God I would tell your lordship with a great deal of pleasure." "If you can't tell me, Billy," said the Judge, "all I can do is save the point"—that is, reserve it for discussion after he had returned to Dublin.

Many, indeed most, of the illustrious members of the Bench and Bar of Ireland in that day sprang from the lower middle-class. Curran's father was a poor seneschal of a manor in County Cork, and Curran would never have received a liberal education but for the bounty of a stranger. Plunkett was the son of a Presbyterian minister who died prematurely, leaving a large family practically unprovided for. Barry Yelverton—afterwards Lord Avonmore—began life as a school teacher. But whatever his origin, once a man became a counsellor he ranked with the gentleman every inch of him, and the gentleman to the backbone. The attorney was in quite a different category. He never was regarded as more, at the most, than a half-mounted gentleman, and very seldom as even that. Apparently this view of him was not mistaken. He seems to have been a cross between an unscrupulous moneylender and an unscrupulous pettifogger. When Lord Norbury was asked for a shilling to help to bury a poor attorney, though he parted hardly with his money, he handed the applicant a guinea, and said, "Here, bury twenty-one of them." And when one committed suicide in Dublin and several of his clients shortly afterwards did the same, the general belief in the city was that the clients had determined to follow him in the hope of being able to recover from him

some of their property. In 'Castle Rackrent,' Miss Edgeworth has given a vivid account of the way in which the family attorney too often acquired the family estate.

The acid test of whether a man belonged to the class of gentlemen every inch of them, or gentlemen to the backbone, was whether other gentlemen of those classes would fight with him. If they would not, the man, whatever his fortune or position, was an outcast. Sometimes people were driven almost mad by the refusal of their fellows to fight. Leonard M'Nally, the now forgotten author of a song not likely soon to be forgotten, "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill," was a barrister in fair practice. For reasons, better in fact than they themselves knew, his fellow-barristers refused to fight with him. He was in absolute despair, and spent his spare time insulting his confrères, in the hope that some one or other would call him out and so restore him to his proper social position. At last Sir Jonah Barrington took pity on him. They met in Phœnix Park. At that time what are now called braces were called in Ireland gallows, as indeed they are still. Sir Jonah, who fired straight, struck M'Nally, but the bullet was stopped by the buckle of his braces. "By J—s," cried Sir Jonah's second, "this is the first time I have ever known a rogue saved by the gallows." If the gallows saved his life, the bullet saved his position. Henceforth he was considered fit to associate or even fight both with gentlemen every inch of them and gentlemen to the backbone.

And barristers in good practice had at that time to do a good deal of fighting. Scarcely one of them had less than half a dozen duels to his credit. Not merely did they fight one another—a demurrer which showed up an opponent's lack of legal knowledge usually led to a duel—but they frequently had to fight their opponents' clients. The Earl of Kilkenny was much given to litigation, and very unfortunate in it. He came to the conclusion that the cause of his bad luck was the counsel employed by his various opponents. There were no less than ten of these; but he and his sons resolved to challenge them all. He was nearly as unfortunate in his duels as in his litigation; and, what between this and the intervention of the Courts, he was stopped in his wild career after three or four of the counsel had been shot at.

Gentlemen every inch of them and gentlemen to the backbone, not to mention half-mounted gentlemen, never paid for anything for which they could avoid payment. They fought it out instead. Of course they would not fight with mere tradesmen; but when tradesmen took out writs against them, if they were served, the gentlemen usually took it out of the High Sheriff, who was a gentleman, and whom they held responsible for the service of the writ. Among them-

selves a duel always cancelled a debt; and sometimes, when one pressed another for payment, he was given as a warning an example of the debtor's skill in shooting.

George Robert Fitzgerald, the most famous or infamous of the Connaught fire-eaters, once when intending to give a creditor such a warning, received one himself. He had bought a horse from a friend and forgot to pay for it. The friend rode over to Fitzgerald's house one morning to remind him of the debt. Fitzgerald invited the friend into his garden, in the middle of which stood a big tree with a round hole bored through its trunk. As the two men walked round the garden Fitzgerald suddenly stopped, and, taking a pistol from his pocket, fired at the hole in the tree's trunk. The bullet passed through the hole. "Not a bad shot," observed Fitzgerald. "I don't see much in it," replied the friend; and the next time they came to the place whence Fitzgerald fired, he took a pistol from his pocket and fired at the hole. His bullet passed through it. Fitzgerald made no remark; but looking about the path as they walked round the garden, he espied a bread-headed nail. He picked it up and stuck it in the bark of the tree. The next time the two men came round Fitzgerald pulled out his pistol again and shot at the nail. He struck it on the head and buried it in the trunk of the tree. "That's better," he said. "Not much," said his friend, and, taking a pin from the lapel of his coat, he stuck it in the bark. The next time they came round he took out his pistol and fired at the pin. He struck it on the head and buried it in the trunk. "Come in," said Fitzgerald, "and I'll pay you for that damned horse."

The career of this remarkable man has often been told, but usually by writers who know more about his adventures in London and Paris than about his proceedings in Ireland; yet the latter are most illustrative of life in Ireland, and especially in the western province in Grattan's day. It was a usual saying then that the King's writ did not run in Connaught. Well, if it did not, the man who tried to serve it usually did. If he was overtaken, the recognised treatment he received was forcing him to eat the writ. It was a report that a certain process-server had been treated thus which led Lord Norbury to express a hope that that writ was not returnable in his Court.

George Robert Fitzgerald came of good stock. His father was a scion of the Leinster family, and his mother was the sister of the Earl of Bristol, Lord Lieutenant for a time of Ireland, and that peer's younger and eccentric brother, the Bishop of Derry. He was heir to a considerable estate in County Mayo, and was educated, as became his birth and position, at Eton. Shortly

after he left Eton his father purchased him a commission, his regiment being then stationed in Galway City.

He was not long in the regiment before he began his fighting career. The first duel arose over his attentions to a young and pretty milliner. His demonstrations of affection became so pressing, and he frightened the lady so much, that she screamed for help. A neighbouring shopkeeper came to her aid, and after warm words with Fitzgerald, challenged him. Fitzgerald haughtily refused to fight with a tradesman, but said that if the shopkeeper could get a gentleman to take his part he would be happy to meet him. The shopkeeper did get a gentleman—one Cæsar French—and he and Fitzgerald at once adjourned to the shopkeeper's premises to settle the quarrel. They fired once, and neither was hit; they were about to fire again when some of the public, hearing the report of the pistols, broke into the house and separated them.

Naturally this affray was discussed that night at the regimental mess, and Colonel Thompson hotly described Fitzgerald's conduct as ungentlemanly and a dishonour to the regiment. Fitzgerald at once challenged the Colonel. They met the next day, and at the first fire the Colonel's bullet struck Fitzgerald on the head. The wound was very severe; for weeks Fitzgerald was an invalid, and many persons were of opinion that his mind was affected by it all the rest of his life.

After he recovered he spent some time in London, and more time in Paris. His fighting propensities, which now developed rapidly, made him much disliked in England and much admired in France. After a long stay over the water, he returned to Ireland, married, took up his residence at his Mayo seat, Turlough Castle, and rented a town house in Dublin.

At Dublin he had duels with Denis Browne, the son of Lord Altamont, and Toler, afterwards Lord Norbury; and at a Castle levee he distinguished himself by spitting in the face of Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare. But henceforth his fame arises chiefly out of his exploits in Mayo.

The first of these exploits was his ill-treatment of his own father: he imprisoned the old man, and even, it is said, harnessed him along with a pet bear which he had brought from France. His younger brother, Lionel, prosecuted him for this, and his counsel was Dick Martin, the King of Connemara, who had been called to the Bar, as many landed proprietors then were, not for the purpose of practising for profit, but of qualifying himself to defend in Court his own rights and the rights of his friends. Martin seems to to have denounced Fitzgerald's conduct in the point-blank way customary at that time, and Fitzgerald bitterly resented it. "Martin," he said to the bar-

rister, "you look very healthy now; you take good care of your constitution; but, I tell you, this day you have taken very bad care of your life." Fitzgerald was found guilty and imprisoned. He was soon, through his family influence, released, and then he took an early opportunity of insulting Martin. There was a meeting between them at Castlebar in the barrack-yard—of all places in the world—and Martin received a wound that imperilled his life.

But it was a feud between two great magnates in Mayo which got Fitzgerald into most scrapes. Lord Altament—the head of the Browne family—was a Government man; Lord Lucan—the head of the Bingham family—was a Patriot man; and they fought not merely with votes and speeches, but with pistols and mobs, for the representation of the county in Parliament. At one election Denis Browne, beforementioned, Lord Altamont's son, was the Government candidate. His uncle, James Browne, who was Prime Sergeant at the Irish Bar, saw that a duel was the way to the affections of the electors, and told Denis so. Denis thereupon picked a quarrel with his opponent, Lord Bingham, which again was fought out in the barrack-yard, with hundreds of the populace looking on. Denis Browne won, and was in due course duly elected member for the county.

Fitzgerald was, as became the nephew of the Bishop of Derry, by way of being a Patriot, so he became very friendly with the Binghams, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, violently hostile to the Brownes. He showed his hostility in his own manner. The Ladies Browne had a great wolf-dog, which they called after their uncle, The Prime Sergeant. One day Fitzgerald called at the family mansion and demanded to see The Prime Sergeant. The terrified ladies directed that it should be shown to him. The moment he saw it he drew a pistol and shot it through the head, declaring that it was a shame to feed such a brute on the best of the land when half the people were starving. He added graciously that he did not mind if the ladies kept lap-dogs.

Fitzgibbon, the Attorney-General, was now practically the ruler of Ireland. He was not the sort of man to forget an insult, and so Fitzgerald's hatred of the Brownes increased their favour with him. The family soon had complete control of the county, and they watched their opportunity for putting Fitzgerald away.

This opportunity arose through what was common enough in the West of Ireland—the abduction of an heiress. The chief criminal in the matter was a Welshman and an English barrister called Timothy Brecknock. He was an elderly man, but he was most anxious to marry a young lady called Miss Anne O'Donel.

Miss O'Donel, however, had her own views on the subject, and she much preferred a suitor of a more equal age called Hyacinth Martin. So Brecknock decided to carry the lady off and make her marry him whether she liked it or not.

Fitzgerald was a close friend of Brecknock's, and he gladly assisted him in the enterprise. When this was accomplished, and the hue and cry was up, it struck Brecknock's legal mind that it would be wise to throw suspicion on somebody else. He accordingly had informations sworn against several enemies of his and Fitzgerald's, and Fitzgerald issued writs for their arrest for a crime which he and the informer had committed. He himself, with the help of his retainers at Turlough Castle, arrested them and imprisoned them in his own house. An Ulster retainer known as Scotch Andy was put in charge of them, and after they had spent a night at Turlough Castle, he, with a number of other men, all fully armed, was sent to escort the prisoners to the jail at Castlebar.

Scotch Andy afterwards, in giving King's evidence, said that Fitzgerald had given him orders to shoot the prisoners if a rescue was attempted. It is probable that he said this to gain favour with the prosecution; for, from all the statements of the other men engaged in the affair, it was Brecknock who told them that, as the prisoners were charged with a felony, they would be justified in shooting them if a rescue was attempted. However that may be, a rescue, real or bogus, was attempted, and the prisoners were shot.

The Brownes saw their opportunity. Fitzgerald and Brecknock and the men of the escort were arrested and charged with murder. While Fitzgerald lay in Castlebar prison, the Brownes seemed to have entertained a doubt of his conviction, for some of their followers broke into the prison and so brutally maltreated him that it was thought for a time he could not survive. But he did, and was brought to trial at the spring assizes of 1796.

Fitzgibbon, as Attorney-General, came down to prosecute; Dennis Browne, as High Sheriff, empanelled the jury; so the result can be anticipated. On Scotch Andy's evidence, which nobody believed, all the prisoners save Scotch Andy were convicted and sentenced to death. Fitzgerald asked for two days' respite, in order to put his private affairs in order, but more probably in hope of a reprieve. This was refused him. And it was ordered that he should be hanged the next afternoon.

It was afterwards said that Denis Browne received a reprieve from Dublin the next morning. If he did, he kept the fact secret. The execution took place, as the Judges had directed, at sunset on 12th June 1786. Whether by accident or design, it proved a ghastly and bungled business. The first rope used was rotten, and

snapped when Fitzgerald fell from the scaffold. Another was procured. It was rotten too, and snapped again. Fitzgerald's legs were broken by the fall; but he had intelligence and courage enough to call out—adopting the popular view that, when the second attempt to hang a convict is abortive, he is entitled to his liberty—"Now my life's my own!" "No," cried Denis Browne, "not as long as there is a rope left in Mayo!" A third rope was procured, it was fastened round his neck, and he was thrown from the scaffold. This time it stood firm, and in a few minutes Fitzgerald's form hung lifeless between heaven and earth.

So lived and so died the most dauntless of the fire-eaters. Such a life and death were surely possible, even in the eighteenth century, in no other nominally civilised country in the world save Ireland. The less said of his life the better; but as to his death, most readers, I think, will agree with what a distinguished counsel said to his Judges when they returned to Dublin, "Well, though Fitzgerald got no more than he deserved, yet the murderer was murdered."[1]

---

[1] The best account I have read of the abduction of Anne O'Donel and the events which ended in Fitzgerald's trial and execution is contained in a monograph entitled 'Fitzgerald the Fire-Eater,' by T. P. Faulkner of the Connaught circuit.

# THE ODYSSEY OF BRIG X.

BY FRANK H. SHAW.

## II.

THE disposal of our casualties and prisoners was not a particularly difficult matter when once we had reached port. But, owing to the rumoured presence of spies in this friendly port, the removals were effected under cover of darkness; we maintained our camouflage rigidly, although it was not perhaps the easiest matter in the world. A small brig can become very small when in port, with no refreshing breezes to temper the below-deck heat; but we contrived to give the hands a certain amount of fresh air by working them in relays, eight men at a time appearing on deck, so that near-lying coasting craft, if they were disposed to inquire too closely into our *bona fides*, might not be rendered suspicious by the exaggerated size of our crew. In this way we went on with fair success, as we thought; though we had rather a shock after we had been a matter of a couple of days in the harbour. That an enterprising Sicilian merchant should pull alongside and request to be allowed to come aboard with a view to chartering the ship for a coast-wise voyage was a compliment to our camouflage. He was referred to the local shipping controller, and went away happy, probably thinking of profits, for so far as our experience went, the Italians were very keenly "on the make" during certain periods of the war.

What the would-be charterer got by way of answer we did not hear; but not very long after his visit, during a meal hour, another boat approached us in the nonchalant devious way such boats have. It was a bumboat, carrying, in addition to an assortment of fruit and vegetables and such oddments, a man or two and a woman or two, with a couple of children—as though the families of the principals had decided that this was the day and the hour for a dress-parade. They promptly indicated their wish to come close alongside and commence trading; but, acting on the strict regulations which we had laid down, they were warned off. Now, we had satisfied ourselves that morning, at dawn, by means of a trip clean round the ship, that she was excellently disguised. There was literally nothing suggestive of a man-of-war about her: her cable, from water-line to hawse-pipe, was rusted and clotted with dried mud instead of being neatly blackened; her sides were smeared with rust streaks, and there were even evidences of cargo having recently been worked in at the hatches, for we had spent some little time

in beating the paintwork outboard, in way of the hatches, with a sack filled with shakings, tied to the end of a rope, to give the exact impression of many bales being roughly jolted against the sides. The chain-plates were enough to make any sailor-man, who counted himself a sailor-man, weep: they were clotted with rust and out of alignment. Our sails were stowed any fashion; and the knocking about aloft that our spars had endured had added to the brig's dishevelment. The awning aft was neither more nor less than an ancient and mildewed topsail, in a shocking state of repair, supported by one broken oar, one half-rotten length of scantling stuff, and certain shabby rope-yarns. No, the disguise was good, we admitted, even to the striped and patched shirts that were hung out to dry.

But one of the women in the bumboat took umbrage at our watchman's orders to remain aloof. She poured forth torrential abuse in Sicilian, which can be made to sound like the hissing of a venomous snake; and she made such insistent demands for "El Capitano" that the watchman had perforce to appeal to higher authority. "Screechin' like a blarsted catamount," he explained by way of apology for intruding upon us in the wardroom.

Our total stock of Italian was a negligible quantity, but the writer volunteered to make some shift at explanation and evasion. He was greeted with shrill clamours, nods and smiles. There were grandiloquent praises, altogether unmerited, of his facial beauty, for a Sicilian bumboat-woman can leave any Blarney-stone kisser sadly to leeward when it comes to blandishments. The boat pulled nearer: tempting baskets were held aloft for inspection and purchase.

"No possible come aborda," the merchants were told. Fragments of dockside Spanish, tediously acquired in earlier years in half a dozen South American ports, came to one's tongue-tip with surprising readiness.

"*Para qui?*"

Grave headshakes and an expression of despair were the answer to this demand for explanations. These proved unsatisfactory: the questions became more insistent.

"Todos los—what the devil's Italian for sailors? It's 'hombres' in Spanish! Oh, this'll do. Todos los marineros malado, mucho malado. Gastados, bimeby, no?" It was not successful Italian by any means, considering we masqueraded under the Italian Tricolour. The chief spokeswoman, a female to dislike with the utmost sincerity—not at all a desirable person to be associated with—touched her coal-black hair, snugly bound beneath a gay handkerchief, then pointed an accusing finger to the writer's blond if scanty locks.

"No brunetta!" she shrieked, with accompanying laughter. Come to think of it, there are not many fair-haired Italians

going about! The boat drew a little nearer; men and women were craning their heads, springing up and down, exactly like children on the outskirts of a crowd when a procession is passing. Came then fresh laughter, and—

"Ah—ah! Boom-boom—yes? Gotta big guns—savvy plenty! Ah—ah! Inglees marineros." They had penetrated our disguise right enough, and we had to put the best face we could on the matter.

"That means altering her rig and painting her all over again," said the C.O. "Port's no place for 'Q' boats; give me the sea."

But we hoodwinked a smart British destroyer more successfully. She grazed us very closely in entering port, bearing some distinguished visitors to the Mediterranean, and her dapper First Lieutenant, a child not long from Dartmouth, resplendent with a gold ring round his cuff, in white trousers and cap-cover, and clad in austere authority, asked us as we passed—

"What the this, that, and the other we meant by fouling the fairway with our stinking manure barge? What right had we to get in the way of a King's ship, eh? It was about time some of us grinning Dagoes were kicked into the place where we were meant to be." Later we met this youth ashore, and complimented him on his zeal—and his lack of perspicuity.

"Honest to God, you took me in," he said. "Never thought for a minute you were a commissioned ship."

"Hope Fritz hasn't got more savvy than you, snotty!" we told him, and bought him another refresher.

There was much work before us. New spars were needed, and we contrived to get some beautiful fir-trees cut down and floated off to us. Our own complement licked them into shape, fitted them, and got them into position. It was here that our early "square-rigged" training came in so helpfully; there is not the smallest doubt about it that a steam-trained Navy man would have been hopelessly at a loss in handling the various problems that arose. Even our knowledge was somewhat rusty, but old training asserted itself, ancient experiences were brought back to recollection, and in the result the job was made a "pukka" one, although it may be that our workmanship would not have satisfied a West End cabinetmaker.

We had wondered somewhat how the lower-deck ratings would adapt themselves to port-life. In the Navy, even in war, ships on the Mediterranean Station were granted leave much as in peace. As soon as a sloop or destroyer arrived in port, a watch was permitted to go ashore and enjoy itself in its own fashion, always providing that its members were back aboard by 7 A.M. next day. Naturally enough we could not allow our men shore-leave. We knew their abilities as fight-

ing men well enough by now, but we knew nothing of their powers of discretion, and we were constantly obsessed by the thought that the strength of a chain lies in its weakest link. We could trust certain of the hands to go ashore and see such life as the port offered, but there were others who might reasonably be expected to forget their caution and look too freely on that Sicilian wine which has a "delay action" effect, and makes a man talkative even against his better inclinations. It must have been galling for them to watch the crews of destroyers and armed trawlers going systematically ashore—where we lay we could see the promenade along the harbour side, and blue uniforms and white caps were much in evidence—but our fellows resigned themselves to circumstances, and developed an inordinate zest for auction bridge!

. . . . . .

We had cabled our adventures and our casualties to our Base immediately on arriving at our port of refuge, and were informed that replacements would be sent. Meantime we carried on with our refitting. It was somewhat galling, though, to lie there inactive whilst big good ships were being sunk with callous frequency almost within gunshot of our harbour. Fritz was getting far more than his lawful bag: he was waiting for convoys, and, himself hidden, was firing into the brown of them indiscriminately, without much thought, apparently, as to whether the ships he attacked carried women and children or not.

But some small satisfaction was granted to us on a morning, when a British drifter arrived in the harbour, and reported having finished the predatory career of a German submarine. We got her skipper aboard to tell us the story, since he was to be trusted, and since it was far from unlikely that we should secure information and useful advice from him.

This skipper was an excellent example, one worthy of enshrining in British naval records as a single specimen of a type that did remarkable work in the war. He was a fisherman, hailing from an East of Scotland port, and until the war broke out had thought of few things beyond fish. That he would ever become a fighting member of the Empire's forces was a thing beyond his comprehension, he told us. But the war changed his view-point, and drew him into its net remorselessly. He promptly adapted himself to changed conditions, just as the Admiralty adapted his drifter. He was a man who had aspired to be a recognised authority on fishing, applying all of his intelligence—he had much—to his chosen trade.

"But I decided that fishing could wait a bit," he told us modestly, "and turned-to to study U-boats. A very interesting occupation."

They gave him rank as

warrant-officer in the R.N.R., stuck a 6-pounder gun on his forecastle head, and sent him out to do his bit. One of his reports is still, I believe, preserved amongst the Admiralty archives, and runs much as follows:—

"To S.N.O.

"Sir,—I have the honour to submit following report.

"Whilst trawling with net, encountered obstacle: supposed it to be enemy submarine. Proceeded to tow. Enemy submarine broke water. Conning-tower opened, enemy submarine commander appeared, put up his hands.

"Enemy submarine commander said: 'I surrender!'

"I said, 'No —— fear you don't.' I gave him thirty rounds, all hits. He sank.

"Sir, I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"———."

Presently, in obedience to the currents of war, the skipper and his trawler were moved down to the Mediterranean, and put on escort duty. He was working with a convoy when he heard the muffled roar of a torpedo exploding, and saw the usual dingy column of foam-topped water rise from the side of a big ship.

"I'd given a lot of thought to submarine tactics," the skipper said pleasantly. "I reckoned that torpedo was fired within a certain arc of action. I went full speed to where I fancied Fritz would be, and dropped a depth-charge. I knew that when he turned away from it he'd either have to go ashore and show himself, or turn on a definite course. Knowing him as well as I do, I considered he wouldn't run ashore, so I made for his other possible course and dropped another depth-charge. I was right: he came up almost under my stern, badly listed, showing his periscope. So I dug out as fast as I could and dropped another 'egg' as I went, and that must have ripped him open. It nearly did for me, too, but beyond being shaken up, we're all right. It did for him right enough, because he came up with a great gash in his side, and stood upright for a bit—just long enough to give my gunner a chance with the 6-pounder: then he went down."

In due course our new hands arrived; we looked them over and decided they would do, although we also decided that those at the Base had a rum idea of what material was necessary to convert into windjammer men. But we had by now a useful backing of experienced hands—men of the real old stamp, who took a pride in doing a job decently, and an equal pride in imparting such lore as they possessed to all such newcomers as were not too proud to learn. One of the new arrivals was a stoker—to be rated as deck-hand!—and in the result he proved to be the pick of the bunch, taking to his deck duties as a duck to water.

Then, all things being in readiness, we paid our respects to the S.N.O., who very evidently considered us men about to die, and without advertisement or ostentation slipped away to sea late one evening after sunset.

The Ægean Sea failed to supply us with the result we longed for. It was strange enough, too. We knew there were submarines about these waters, for our wireless—the aerial of which was laid up in the heart of a rope running to the main-mast head—told us so. Almost every day we picked up some "allo"—a signal from the infinite that a U-boat had been sighted or that its activities had been noticed. All such signals gave the position of the attacker sighting; and immediately we were informed, the chart was consulted, the respective positions of U-boat and "Q" boat were plotted, and a consultation was held as to the best course of action to pursue.

One such "allo" came through when we were lying becalmed a hundred miles north and west of Suda Bay. We had been becalmed for the best part of a week, on a spot that was notoriously a submarine hunting-ground, and we had seen not so much as the flicker of a periscope's wake.

"How do we stand as regards that chap, Pilot?" asked the skipper. The Pilot studied the wireless signal and then scratched his head. Next he dived below and returned with the chart and parallel rulers. The three of us snugged down on the exhaust-pipe of the oil-engine, well beneath the bulwarks. The "allo" gave exactly our then position! There was something seriously wrong somewhere. We busied ourselves with sextant and chronometer, and fixed our own precise position to a hair's-breadth; yes, we'd made no mistake. But though one of us climbed to the very main truck and scanned the sea-surface thoroughly, not a vestige of submarine, wreckage, or anything else could we discover; so evidently the ship that sent out the warning was in error somehow.

We still continued hopeful. Every trivial patch of floating debris, such as fragments of straw, bits of packing-cases, tufts of weeds, was most conscientiously scrutinised; for we were well aware that Fritz had rather a fondness for using such trifles of flotsam as covering for his observant periscope, and we fervently hoped every time we sighted such a cluster.

Then, when we were on the eve of despair, wondering in a vague fashion whether the submarine war had finished without our being apprised of the fact, we got a wireless from the Base, recommending a departure from our ordained beat, as a hostile underwater craft was extremely active in the Kithera Channel, not so very far distant from the island of Crete. As regular patrols had been unable to bring this pest to action, we were instructed to do what we could in the matter.

"Might as well water at

Suda Bay as anywhere else," said the skipper. So course was shaped in that direction. The wind was light and foul, and it meant a dead dry beat, unless the conditions improved. That was what it resolved itself into; we tacked ship every watch, and made very indifferent headway. If we had worked our engines we could have knocked off the distance in something like thirty hours; but that was a thing impossible. One good thing about it: it trained the crew in smart handling of the yards and gave them something to do.

We crept slowly towards the spot where action might reasonably be expected, but saw nothing. Three days of this work, and then we came across that bad weather for which the neighbourhood of Crete is famous. It was really bad weather. Even a big ship would have felt distressed; our little craft had rough handling.

A rapidly falling glass warned us what we were to expect, although the season for storms was supposed to be past. All three of us had experienced bad weather in all quarters of the globe; the skipper was particularly well acquainted with the conditions prevailing in the China Seas, the haunt of the terrible typhoon. We were all concerned to note the great fall of the barometer.

"I've seen it go down like this before, and we got a perisher," the skipper stated. But as yet there was nothing visible; the atmosphere was a trifle oppressive, perhaps, and there was an unnatural sheen in the sky; there was also a long slow swell running up which caused the brig to throw herself about with some violence. Beyond this swell the sea was unruffled; a flat calm held, not even a catspaw showed.

Number One busied himself with seeing that everything was adequately secured. We were not yet quite certain how the brig would behave in a real gale; but we hoped for the best. She was built of wood and might reasonably be expected to be dry; but her refitting as a "Q" boat might have played all kinds of tricks with her natural buoyancy and trim; and one never knew!

"Since we're not out to break records, we'll get her shortened down," the skipper said; and it was done. All the lighter sails were carefully stowed; halliards were cleared in readiness for hasty letting go; reef-pennants were rove and reef-earrings were got up and placed handy. With darkness a still further reduction of sail was made, and by eight o'clock the ship was stripped and ready for whatever might come. It being my first watch, I consulted the barometer in the ward-room prior to going on deck; it was still falling, down to 28″ 50! This in itself was enough to arouse trepidation. The glass was "pumping," too—the hand of the aneroid was constantly vibrating as though nervous of coming events. On deck it was very dark indeed. It was impossible even to make out the blackness of the canvas against the sky; impossible to see any-

thing until one stumbled into it. The feeling of unnatural oppression was more pronounced than ever; the swell had subsided, and there was now not even the slamming of the canvas to break the silence. Only occasionally the wheel-ropes creaked, or the slight eddies under the counter made a gurgling sound.

"I've got her down to the topsails, and taken a reef in the mainsail," said the C.O. "Everything else is stowed, except the fore-staysail. She's not steering, so you'll have to watch her when it does come."

We talked in hushed voices, suiting ourselves to the uncanny atmospheric effect. It was exactly as though a taut string had been stretched about the ship, a string stretched to breaking-point; and I felt that to speak in a natural voice would break that strain with disastrous results. Presently the skipper went below. Nothing happened. There was a ventilator communicating with the ward-room; a light was still burning in our mess. I spoke down the ventilator, asking whoever was there for the reading of the barometer. The skipper answered. The barometer registered 28″ 30.

"It won't be long now," he added consolingly.

But ten o'clock came and went, half-past ten; still the brooding tightness held. You could see the men were feeling the strain—they moved as it were aimlessly aft; the petty officer of the watch came to me with a question, and showed a disposition to ask more questions when this was answered; he spoke loudly, so that the watch could hear and take comfort.

"I think we'll furl the upper topsail and scandalise the mainsail," I said. No doubt about it, this uncanny silence was affecting the nerves!

"Very good, sir — tops'l halliards!" The sail was lowered and furled; the men descended and came aft. Scandalising the mainsail meant that the big fore-and-aft sail was to be reduced in its area to a minimum. The jaws of the gaff were lashed to the mast, just above the boom; the third reef-band was secured to the foot of the sail, and the peak of the gaff was then hoisted as high as it would go.

Before the peak halliards were belayed, there was a monstrous flash of lightning, cruelly vivid. For a second everything was revealed as clearly as though the sun had suddenly flooded the world. Then a greater darkness than ever supervened. The ensuing crack of thunder was exactly as though a shell had burst in the magazine. Followed some slashing drops of rain, from their feel as big as oysters. One was handicapped by that appalling blackness; it was impossible to see a thing, impossible, indeed, to tell which was forward and which was aft. And then, in the north-east quadrant, showed a strange momentary lightening of the gloom: it was possible to hear a curious rushing sound. The storm was on us before we could realise it; it came away

with breath-stopping suddenness. And whereas we had looked for it to come from the south-west, it was the north-east that vomited up this bellowing medley of wrath.

Sometimes I wonder even now how it was we were not souppered at the outset. Everything seemed to be happening at once; but the most disconcerting detail at the very moment of onset was the wild yell of the helmsman: "Binnacle lights out, sir!"

Already the force of the wind was stunning; it was as though a vast solid body had been hurled with phenomenal force on the brig. For the first few moments it was impossible to move against the blast; men were thrown like straws against the lee bulwarks, and pinned there immovably. A big wave soared up to windward; it could be felt, not seen; it fell with a swirling roar over the rail and flooded the decks knee-deep. There was a crackling smash of gratings; something heavy carried away with a jar that shook the ship in every timber; spray flew like grape-shot, stinging the exposed flesh cruelly. To get aft to the wheel was an impossibility just then.

"Keep the wind right aft—on the back of your neck!" I howled. Faintly through that strident uproar came the echoing: "Back of the neck, sir!" The helmsman was the same man who had asked some time before what "By the wind" meant in degrees!

The initial sensation of helplessness was very trying. It was precisely as though one had been violently spun round in a mighty cask at lightning speed, and then hurled forth like a stone from a sling into the stunning bellow of a new creation. Under-running this sensation was a smattering of relief that sail had been shortened in time—whatever happened to the ship, the best possible means had been taken to safeguard her. This encouraged one to beat a slow way aft. There were many obstacles in the way, but the growing fury that possessed one made light of them. At the cost of much lost skin and many fearsome bruises, the wheel was gained.

"Binnacle lights out, sir!" complained the man at the wheel. "Can't see a thing——"

"Then feel." It was necessary to fling an arm around him to hold oneself in position to communicate information. "You've got to keep the wind right aft — right aft, see?"

He saw. It was different from handling a steam or electric telemotor in a warmed and well-lighted wheel-house; but he saw. The ship was scurrying like a scalded cat, going as fast as she had ever done in her life possibly, if the high-piled white ridges on either beam were anything to go by. These were all that were visible: they merged into one white menace astern, and vanished into the Stygian gloom. They made one feel very lonely. But something

that must have been pride—probably false pride—restrained one from summoning the skipper. All said and done, he kept a watch like the rest of us, and deserved his leisure.

One was woefully conscious of the tininess of the brig now; she seemed a mere toy in all that whirling immensity of agitated air and water—a very chip of flotsam. Could she keep ahead of the piling seas astern? was one disturbing thought, or would she run under? Because of her low freeboard—not more than four feet—she seemed terribly menaced. The combers astern were growing bigger and bigger; it was possible to see their gathering rush, their high towering, their crashing fall, with the mad sprays pelting ahead of them and sluicing the after-part as though with a gigantic hose. If once the fabric hesitated in her scared leaping, one of those big fellows would assuredly overrun her and smash up everything. The after gun-house was a weak spot; if that were torn away there was absolutely nothing to prevent the entire hull filling. But to heave-to in that smother was even more of a risk than to run, and fragments of ancient learning came back to the dazed mind in snatches.

It was the Northern hemisphere, and the proper thing to do with a revolving storm was to run with the wind on the starboard quarter or heave-to on the port-tack, in order to win free of the storm's centre, where certain destruction awaited. Right, it should be done. But the brig was swinging wildly to the constant play of the helm, and it was necessary to get a light in the binnacle to aid the helmsman. Shouting brought no response, therefore it was necessary to clamber forward again, shouting all the time, until a Newfoundland lad appeared from under one's feet. He supplied a remedy that had escaped my attention. Stowed away in a coil of rope aft was an electric torch, its chief purpose being for the officer of the watch to satisfy himself that the gun-sights were accurately set o' nights, to enable him to read such wireless messages as might be pushed up through the ventilator of the wireless cabin. This torch was thrust into the binnacle and switched on, and the helmsman, being given a course that would keep the wind on the starboard quarter, was happy again, assured of success. And almost immediately a new problem presented itself. The ship was wild in her motions; she danced like a cork to every wave-crest; she roared tumultuously into every sea-cavern. But it had been possible to keep some sort of a footing, spite of constantly swirling water, spite of the blare of the wind. Now the feet slipped uselessly on the planking; as one steadied himself for a roll he found his legs torn away from beneath him. Something was crashing and thudding noisily

about forward, too—a sound to annoy when the nerves were taut-strained. The petty officer was summoned; he arrived, judging by the sound of his voice, on all-fours. He was drawn into the slight shelter of the water-breakers, an arm was thrown about him.

"What's that kicking up such a dust for'ard?"

"Don't know, sir." We slithered and slipped in our grotesque embrace, and through the drumming flap of the wind it was possible to hear fervent curses from various directions.

"Think it must be the paint-drums, sir." It was the paint-drums; they had been jolted bodily from their lashings. We had mixed a large quantity of green paint for fresh disguise — gallons and gallons of it. And the beastly stuff was everywhere; nothing had escaped it. The entire decks were plastered with it; every rope was fouled; we ourselves, when we had light enough to ascertain, were smothered from head to foot owing to our wild sprawling. There was nothing to do immediately save curse our ill-luck and the lack of proper stowage space, and to vow darkly that some one would hang for it. We rigged life-lines along the deck, for without them it was frankly impossible to move a pace; and then we watched the ship and the storm, and prayed for better times.

Then the watch was relieved: spite of the turmoil some one had remembered to rouse them out. But the newcomers had not been warned about the oceans of paint, and their progress aft was a sulphurous one. My relief slid aft like the runaway gun in Victor Hugo's book, and I realised the value of a deep-sea training as I listened to the fervent epithets he hurled on the ship, on the Mediterranean, on the war generally. Presently he began to take a professional interest in the ship and her fortunes. He agreed that it was blowing "above a bit"; he further stated that the drum of wind and the hissing confusion that rioted everywhere had half-stunned him. His cabin had also been flooded — that was his chiefest worry, and he was afraid bilge-water had got into his lockers. More than that, he thirsted for coffee—lots of coffee. But the galley fire had been extinguished long ago by the first sea, and coffee was not forthcoming.

To him it was explained what had happened; surmises were offered as to what was likely to happen. Best to keep the ship running as she was for a bit, until developments arose. No, there was no land to be immediately scared of ahead, nothing but open water, thank the Lord!

"Who'd sell a farm and go to sea?" he queried fervently. "Ouch!" A wave-top out him in the teeth and left him gasping. I deemed it advisable to go below.

It was not so easy a matter as it seemed. The paint had

something to say about it. Imagine a deck less than a hundred feet long, that deck tilted upwards at an angle of something like forty degrees. Imagine that deck smeared with slimy paint that is so mixed with salt water as to create an unbelievably treacherous surface. Imagine a sodden rope stretched to form a hand-rail, that rope plentifully besmeared with more paint, until the fingers cannot retain their grip. Imagine the sensation of helplessness as the ship throws herself shudderingly into a noisome abyss just as one is braced for an upward climb; visualise the fingers sliding uselessly along the rope as the feet refuse to grip the planking; imagine, just as one is gasping and fighting, a mighty avalanche of water crashing down. Good clean action against an enemy in smooth water would be infinitely preferable! But somehow the difficult passage was negotiated and the havenage of below-decks reached.

It was doubtful if more comfort or pleasure existed here below than above. Down under the deck the diminutive size of the brig was even more apparent than out in the open. She seemed a mere toy, and a creaking flimsily-built toy at that. Everywhere she was groaning and protesting. There were wild screams from metal plates, harsh raspings of plank working on plank; a gun that seemed loose in its mountings thudded monotonously; the shells in their racks made a noise and set the jaded mind wondering what would happen if one were thrown from its place and prematurely exploded. The bilge-water roared and splashed and gurgled; by the fitful light of the battle lanterns clamped to the bulkheads it could be seen leaping through the lining. The ship was straining herself, and who knew whether her Italian builders had been conscientious workmen? If a butt started she would fill and go down like a stone.

But it was soothing to work a devious way beneath swinging hammocks, whence satisfying snores rose in measured cadence, to the skipper's cabin, and to see him, flat on his back, his mouth wide open, sleeping soundly in the midst of all that unholy tumult. After all, why worry? It was the skipper's affair entirely, and if he knew no concern, why should a subordinate know apprehension? It seemed a pity to wake him; but it had to be done. He had left orders to be aroused if the weather worsened, and it had worsened!

The din in his tiny cabin was incredible. There was the slam of broken water overhead, the whistle and burr of the wind down an insufficiently closed ventilator; there was the sloosh of bilge-water—and its infamous stench! Every movable thing in the apartment was moving, racing from side to side at each sickening lurch. Certain precious stores, kept under the skipper's own eye, had fallen from their shelves into his bunk and there started a miniature chorus of

their own. A chair, capsized, ran backwards and forwards. A loose lamp-glass chattered diabolically; an ink-bottle rolled with maddening persistence across the small table—its recent contents had made chaos of an open drawerful of collars and white shirts. But a couple of words spoken in an ordinary voice aroused him instantly. He sat up, alert, ready for any emergency. This was the sea-trained brain at work.

"How's she doing?" he asked, reaching for a tin of cigarettes and a box of matches. He was told; he was pleased to approve of the action taken.

Then: "I think I'll go up. —— 'll be feeling a bit lonely; and it always gets worse at two o'clock."

He jumped out of his bunk into a foot of filthy water, and howled disgust. But he equipped himself with sea-boots and oilskins; made a sensible suggestion that one of the engine-room blow-lamps should be set agoing in order to boil water and provide coffee, and with a sou'wester lashed securely under his chin, vanished into the gloom of the mess-deck. For myself, feeling unutterably fatigued, for there is no weariness of body and spirit to equal that which comes of facing agitated elements, I crept to my bunk, and flung myself down all standing, careless of damp clothing, careless of everything.

So sleep came: dead, heavy, unrefreshing sleep. There was presently no fresh air below, every aperture communicating with the open leaked water, and was consequently sealed tight. The stench from the stirred bilges was indescribable: it was like living in a foul sewer. And whilst I slept, fitfully at first, suddenly later, the ship fought the fight of her life. It was a record gale for those waters: a China Seas typhoon in so far as weight of wind was concerned—an exceptional atmospheric disturbance. At two o'clock the skipper deemed it advisable to heave-to; the lower topsail was goosewinged—although it was only a pocket-handkerchief of a sail it required the watch on deck and the stand-by watch to handle it—and under this shortened rag and the scandalised mainsail, the brig came up to the wind.

"I thought she was spitchered, though," the skipper said afterwards, when describing the happening. "I got all hands stowed away up the rigging and under the forecastle head, and took the wheel myself to bring her up, but—she shipped one sanakatowzer that nearly swamped her. Carried away the Abandon Ship boat; made a clean job of that. I thought she'd open out like a cardboard-box, but she stuck together."

Three-quarters of the crew were sea-sick, and yet many of them were destroyer-trained men. But the brig's movements were astonishingly disturbing—for all the world like a maddened horse at the end of a rope. She plunged up and down, she jerked side-

ways, and then brought up with a heart-stopping jar that promised to start the bolts in her planking; and as she paused, shuddering throughout her length, a great sea would pile aboard her to the accompaniment of hundreds of discordant sounds, and she would cower away, inert and lifeless, until the soul that had been built into her reasserted itself, and set her fighting again.

Be sure one dreamed disturbing dreams! One dream was particularly realistic. The helpless body was being carried in mighty arms to the summit of a towering mountain, whose peak was many miles above the highest clouds. Strong men bore the quivering frame higher and higher, and they made uncouth jests as they went. They arrived at a wind-blown summit, far above all living things: a wilderness of gaunt boulders and snowdrifts, where devils gibbered and raved and clamoured; and then — they threw their burden down into the infinite. Down and down —through millions of miles of space—that piteous body fell, until out of the monstrous uncertainty below there came with growing distinctness the burring note of a watchman's rattle. This was altogether ridiculous; a need was felt by the subconscious brain to rouse up and instruct Creation in the fitness of things. Watchmen's rattles were a survival of ancient times, they were never used nowadays.

Then I was awake, sitting upright in the bunk, quivering. The rattle came again, really this time. It was the alarm!

"This just about puts the lid on it," was the inevitable thought. That an enemy submarine should join in the arrayed forces against us wasn't cricket. But there was no denying that summons; it came again.

My quarters were inky dark; the ventilator was screwed down tightly; the blinding shutters had been drawn across the small deadlights, so that lamplight might not show up above and reveal our presence to a possible enemy. No time to dress, beyond the garments one had turned-in in; all that was to be done was to leap into the slooshing bilge-water that covered the floor, and make the best of one's way above. It was difficult to maintain the caution necessary; but somehow the after-part was reached.

Yes, there was Fritz all right — on the surface, and making heavy weather of it too. It was daylight, but not the customary Mediterranean daylight. This was yellowish and livid, unreal and menacing, as though all Heaven's wrath were embodied in one appalling seascape. Words may not do justice to the grimness of the outlook. The horizon was closed in by a mist of high-thrown spray; the sky drooped leadenly to meet the spiteful uplift of the sea; there were ragged waterspouts showing here and there. But we had no eyes for these natural phenomena: our atten-

tion was concentrated on the submarine.

It was difficult to distinguish her from the grey-green immensity of the sea: she was well camouflaged, indeed; but gradually the eyes discerned her outlines, exactly as one sees a lurking shark beneath the sea's surface from aloft. They had rigged weather-cloths about her conning-tower, and had brought her well to the surface; and from the look of her she was seaworthy enough, though uncomfortable. We could see the big numbers painted on that conning-tower, we could even see her 22-pounder gun on the forward-deck—but no men were grouped about that piece of ordnance; we could not distinguish, indeed, a living soul about her. She was certainly not more than three thousand yards away, going in the opposite direction to ourselves: a big fellow enough—one capable of giving us a hammering if it came to a set-to.

To visit the gun-positions and satisfy oneself that all was in readiness for action was no light matter, but it had to be done. Everything was correct: the men were crouching in cover about the hidden guns, although heavy water was pouring over them; but every man was compelled to cling to something solid to maintain himself in position. One thing was certain: if it came to an engagement there would be no records broken in getting the guns up, if, indeed, they would come up at all.

Back aft again to report, and to join the skipper crouching below the shelter of the bulwarks.

"Isn't it just our luck, eh? Isn't it? Look at her!" He indicated the lively antics of Brig X. "Imagine any one shooting decently from this! He's got us sitting if he likes to open out on us."

For ourselves, we could do nothing. The U-boat was to windward of us, and we were making practically no headway. To open fire at that range would have been folly; at a target ten times the size of Fritz, as he showed to us, our gun-layers could not have made decent practice, owing to our terrific motion. Even at point-blank range it is doubtful whether the finest gun-layer in the Navy could have registered a single hit. To commence an action under those conditions would have been comparable with a rifleman, daped at the end of a spiral spring violently agitated, opening fire on a fluttering sparrow. Of course, if Fritz closed us, and began to get busy, we should fight; but meantime—the elements had taken the matter into their own hands, and imposed an enforced truce.

"Let's pray God he doesn't whack a mouldy into us," the C.O. said. "No boats——"

There was quite a good deal for the imagination to work on. There was no possibility of our enacting our customary *rôle*—that of affecting to abandon the ship and so luring the U-boat to within hitting distance—for our Abandon

Ship boat was floating in fragments somewhere astern; and even had we had it, it would never have lived for five minutes in the sea that was then running. No; we were very much at the enemy's mercy if he cared to attack; but he refrained.

"If I'd command of one of those things," the skipper said, "I'd get down as deep as I could and leave this sort of muck to surface craft."

But maybe the German commander was desirous of proving his command's capabilities in heavy weather; or maybe it was necessary to recharge his batteries, no matter what the weather was like.

He passed us without any sign: a long sinister shape, with white sprays bursting all about; and we drew deep breaths of thankfulness when we realised that no attack was eventuating.

The gale endured for thirty-six hours. It gathered force during the forenoon following the sighting of the submarine, and blew frenziedly—so much so that it tore our topsail clean out of the bolt-ropes and sent it whirling away down wind like a gigantic sea-bird. We hoisted a rag of a staysail, and poured a drop of oil out to windward—we wished we had long ago poured away that devastating paint!—and by dint of the standing luck of the Navy—a luck which seems to abide by the Navy-outside-the-Navy—we came through without any real mishap.

As, however, what remained of our sparse water-supply was now somewhat brackish, owing to the amount of the Mediterranean that had entered the water-barricoes on deck, and leaked down the pump into the tank; and as, further, on account of the loss of our boat, we were no longer in a position to enact our *rôle* of merchantman with any possibility of hoodwinking Fritz, we decided to head forthwith for Suda Bay, where comfort might be found. The gale died down, shifting as it lessened; then a favourable breeze sprang up to replace it, and we were able to bend fresh canvas to replace that carried away, to set every stitch we could carry, and to dry and warm our shivering selves. Promptly we commenced to clean up the mess—no small job. Everything was saturated below; the magazines even were awash; and our boasted immaculateness below was now hideous confusion. But fine weather made a great deal of difference: the men turned to with a will, their spirits quickly reviving in the fashion peculiar to sailor-men; and after a couple of days more the big storm was merely a memory.

Some little time later we sighted the high Cretan land, with historical Mount Ida dominating the grey-blue mystery of that astonishing island.

Once again we got ourselves into instant readiness for action, for it was in this neighbourhood that the sub-

marine we had been instructed to search for might be found. True, we were not able to play the part according to the stage directions; but since it was solely on account of Fritz that we had been required to submit to that dusting we had experienced, we were quite anxious to meet him and get a bit of our own back. We decided that if a U-boat did appear and engage, the Abandon Ship party would leave the ship according to programme, with lifebelts about them. This promised to be even a better lure than the despatching of the boat. But no U-boat showed itself in the Kithera Channel, although we loitered about there for a considerable time, on account of lessening and baffling winds. Finally, as our water-supply was beginning to present a real problem, we sent a wireless signal to Suda Bay, and soon after sunset a steam drifter picked us up and towed us vigorously to havenage.

A British light cruiser of an old type, dismantled to act as a wireless hulk, was moored in Suda Bay. Her Commander was the local S.N.O., and to him our skipper reported the following morning. The first question asked was for news concerning the submarine that had been active in that vicinity. Was the storm-girt one we had seen the fellow we sought? He was not.

Said the Commander of the wireless ship: "Just before that big gale came on, we thought we would try a bit of a dodge on our own. We found an obsolete 4·7 gun with a few rounds of ammunition, and fixed it up aboard a Greek caïque: the gun was nearly as big as the caïque. We threw an old tarpaulin over it, and off the beggars went. Before they'd been away from here twelve hours up came Fritz and opened out on them. They waited till he came a bit closer, and let him have it. Sank him with two rounds, and brought eighteen prisoners back!"

So there we were! Our "Q" boat had cost a small fortune to equip: she was far from being an inexpensive craft to run; but the hastily-fitted caïque, which had merely used local resources, had met with all the luck. Still, there was a Fritz the less—that was the main point.

At Suda Bay we were supplied with all that was necessary to make life endurable. The cruiser's wardroom was thrown wide open to us. We were offered sleeping accommodation aboard, if we so desired, in big airy cabins, with electric light and clean linen sheets; with skilled marines as body-servants; drinks chilled by snow from Mount Ida; a cuisine that would not have disgraced a West End hotel. It was all very tempting, but—it would not have been fair to the men. It was still impossible to give them leave; there was not sufficient accommodation aboard the cruiser for them all; they had to stick the brig, and we

should have been but inconsiderate leaders of those bold spirits had we accepted the good things offered and left the rest to suffer discomfort. Such actions do not make for loyalty, and the loyalty and efficiency of our crew were matters that affected us very nearly.

We stayed there for some days, awaiting a reply to our signal to the Base. The Fritz who was our special objective was settled and done with; whither should we search now? After a decent interval we received orders to return to the Base by way of Zante and Spartivento, keeping within certain well-defined limits. There was good hope of picking up some daring U-boat that had penetrated the Adriatic barrage.

The skipper and myself had just finished lunch, two days after sighting Zante, and were discussing certain phases of life afloat. This C.O. had commanded, before the sailing "Q's" eventuated, a swarm of mine-sweeping trawlers, most of which hailed from Scottish ports. They were, he said, manned by doughty seamen—men to whom fear was unknown. He was telling me a story. Before starting forth on a mine-sweeping patrol, he had warned these veterans on no account to venture within three miles of certain land. It was strongly inimical to our cause: its inhabitants were frankly murderous by nature. On a day the skipper set out to visit this patrol, and when he found it and ran down he was greeted by the skipper with a request to know if he would care for fresh eggs, vegetables, and fowls.

"Where did you get them?" he asked.

"From yon wee village there on the hill, sorr."

The C.O. looked at the hill; it was two good miles from the coast, and in the very heart of enemy country.

"Didn't I tell you those people ashore were hostile?" he asked.

"They were verra kind tae us, sorr," said the mine-sweeper. They had landed, walked the intervening miles in seaboots and pilot-coats, and had received rich gifts in kind!

"What did you say to them?" I asked.

"Oh, gave them a slating; told them what might have happened——"

It was just then the alarm rang in no uncertain manner.

"Let's hope Fritz'll be verra kind tae us," said the C.O., as we scuttled to our action stations.

Yes, there he was, right enough. Six thousand yards away, on the surface; a big fellow, too, from the evidence. Well, we were ready for him this time. Things were somewhat in his favour; for he was lying in the shelter of the land, whilst we, in open water, were troubled by a fresh breeze that had sprung up an hour or so before, bringing with it a sea that made Brig X somewhat lively as a gun-platform.

We went through the usual

process: we were getting used to it now. Fritz seemed intent on ignoring us completely; he made no signal to indicate that he was even aware of our presence. We held on our way, trying to work up a little nearer the land to get the benefit of smooth water; but we could not lie high enough to assist us materially.

Then Fritz, after deluding us into the belief that he was about to leave us unmolested, suddenly turned his bow towards us and came along at a great pace. At 4000 yards he opened fire. His first shell passed through the boom foresail; it did not burst.

"Abandon ship!" ordered the C.O.

The Abandon Ship party promptly laid the headyards aback to stop the ship's way; this done, they busied themselves with getting out the boat. Another shell passed ahead of us as they were so employed. Then another arrived; it pitched clean in the boat and burst there, shattering it and turning the adjacent deck into a shambles.

The game was not being played according to the rules: even when discussing the hundred and one chances of disaster and unkind fortune, we had never taken into account the possibility of the sudden loss of our Abandon Ship boat, which boat was the main essential of our camouflage.

We were all disconcerted; the C.O. was not a man trained throughout his life to the usages of war; he was in the essentials a merchant seaman. He would, I think, hardly have been blameworthy had he lost his head in such a crisis as this.

"We'll give him a fight for it," he said, when the exact state of affairs was reported to him. "All we can do just now is to carry on as before."

He was crouched aft by the wheel, his eyes at the sighting slits in the bulwarks. He told me afterwards that his main desire in life about then was to get up on the bulwarks and yell to Fritz to come to close quarters and fight the matter out like a man. It was only by a tremendous effort of will that he was able to prevent himself from committing such a *faux pas*. In hours of relaxation one gained a definite impression of this R.N.R. Lieutenant. He was light-hearted, and did not give great suggestion of strength of character; but in reality he was compounded of a judicious mixture of steel and whalebone, and capable of rising to practically any emergency.

"He doesn't know we're a 'Q' yet," he said. It is easy to call up a remembrance of him as he spoke. He was dressed quaintly, in well-washed dungarees, a startling shirt, a gaudy waist-cloth, rope-soled shoes, with a huge straw hat topping everything. His face was tallow-yellow in hue, and his eyes seemed to have sunk clean into his skull; but when he half-turned them it was possible to notice quite a purposeful expression in them.

At moments of crisis his Scots accent became more pronounced.

"We musn't let ourselves get too self-conscious," observed he, and he spoke slowly, seeking for the right words. "We knew what we are; Fritz doesn't. Even if he's suspicious he has no proof. In a way this might be a godsend."

Then, without raising his voice in the least degree, he let out such a stream of curses to Fritz's address as would have left the foulest-swearing army in Flanders aghast and envious. Normally he deprecated bad language; and the usual somewhat unfiltered profanity that comprised the atmosphere in which we lived below decks annoyed him excessively. He was everlastingly attempting to cleanse the conversation that existed on the mess-decks just outside our trivial accommodation; but on this occasion he outdid even our choicest swearers.

"That's better," he said, as the spasm spent itself.

"What are you going to do?" was the natural question.

"I'm going to do nothing—yet," the C.O. said. "You get along and see what can be done at the boat."

I obeyed. It seemed a long way from the afterpart of the deck to the main hatch! Actually it was a distance of not more than forty feet; but a man's brain can conjure up a lot of disturbing impressions during a crawl over such a distance.

It was not possible to do very much. The boat was smashed nastily: a gaping hole was blown in its side, and the deck about was savagely ripped and scored. One man had been killed outright—best not to enter into too meticulous detail. Modern shells cause horrible havoc, and this unfortunate petty officer had taken the full weight of the explosion. His head was the only part that was anything like intact. Another man was badly wounded in the stomach; three others had minor casualties, which bled profusely; these three, together with the rest who were actually uninjured, were all stunned by the appalling crash of the shell-burst, and were crouching away like whipped dogs. They were not to blame, as any man who has survived the near explosion of high-explosive shell will realise. The concussion had left them as helpless as newly-born children; and all the shouting and urging in the world left them unmoved.

But one man, whose business it was to attend to the smoke-boxes, an A.B. named Brown, behaved extremely well. Brown was a typical lower-deck man, well-mannered and an excellent sailor, a man with long service. He had not a vestige of ambition whatsoever; with his ability he might easily have qualified for promotion; but he repeatedly assured me that he had no liking for responsibility. He possessed a fault—in port he got drunk, thoroughly drunk. But he did it decently—if a man can get intoxicated decently. Instead of filling

himself full of grog and returning to the ship to create unpleasantness, he vanished utterly. After a lapse of days he returned, sober, civil, and apologetic, quite satisfied with his adventure and eager to atone for his lapse. Because of his undoubted qualities, it was not a difficult task to overlook his shortcomings—especially when one compared them with the faults of some others of our crew, who not only drank too freely but made themselves a thorough nuisance when under the influence of liquor.

The shell had burst on the deck immediately above his head. He had been stationed at the foot of the ladder that ran down the main-hatch to the mess-deck; his duty was to set fire to a smoke-box on the order being given, to convey the impression to the attacking submarine that he had registered a hit and set the ship on fire. As the brig was properly on fire, owing to a raffle of loose oakum and "shakings" having ignited, he presumably decided that his *rôle* was no longer necessary. He therefore crawled on deck and began to busy himself in doing good. The petty officer was beyond his powers of succour; but the worst wounded man—White by name—needed attention. Brown promptly gave it. He knew exactly where to find dressings, and he ripped open the packages and applied the necessary wads of lint and wood-wool as stoically as if he were a famous surgeon operating under normal conditions. He then dragged the casualty into a safer place, and made him as comfortable as circumstances permitted. White was screaming on account of the considerable agony he was suffering; and it was Brown who volunteered to go down to the medicine-chest and procure the morphia that was there. He was very alert and resourceful—chock-full of suggestions. When I complained about the lack of forethought that prompted morphia to be supplied in tabloid form instead of liquid; when I raved about the difficulty of making a solution of the drug that could be injected under the sufferer's skin, it was Brown who made the suggestion that a couple of the minute tabloids placed under the man's tongue would bring relief. This was done accordingly, and in an astonishingly short time White's outcries ceased, and he became simply a sodden, hard-breathing huddle of humanity.

Even now Brown was not satisfied. He set to work to rouse the shell-shocked men into some semblance of utility. "Here, get out of it," Brown said, and belaboured them methodically with a deck-scrubber. "You ain't hurt; there ain't nothing the matter with you. Sanguinary scrimshankers you are! You ought to be humping coal-sacks aboard a sanguinary battleship, you ought—that's your sanguinary mark!" He said a great deal more to the same effect, but the men were beyond caring, and his stinging criticisms of their behaviour

left them unmoved. Those criticisms were far more stinging than I have ventured to write; any reader with a knowledge of naval vernacular can supply the rest out of his own experience.

Brown next secured a broom —the orderly instinct of the Navy coming uppermost even in this moment of stress—and commenced to sweep up the mess on deck, which, he admitted afterwards, revolted his tidy soul!

Meantime, the U-boat was shelling us intermittently, still maintaining her range. I have no doubt her commander was somewhat astonished at the course of events. He naturally did not know that we had lost our boat, and it is quite possible that his suspicions were growing stronger than ever. Ordinary Italian coasting brigs' crews usually panicked whole-heartedly when attacked, and promptly abandoned their floating homes.

Fortunately for us the shooting was indifferent. This was not to be wondered at, considering the state of the sea. Steadied as we were by the wind, we were still throwing ourselves about in a decidedly unpleasant fashion; the U-boat, with nothing to hold her against the run of the waves, must have been dancing wildly. Although shells were dropping here and there, over us and short, ahead and astern, there were no more direct hits.

But—mark how Fate was working against us this particular day. The C.O., with an idea, apparently, of drawing Fritz to closer quarters, decided to get away before the wind. His intention, he told us afterwards, was to get speed on the ship, and steady her a bit. He therefore shouted to the helmsman—

"Up, up!" He wanted him to grind the wheel hard up and permit the ship to pay off. Let it be remembered that the nerves of all aboard were on strain,—that brains were somewhat stunned by the quick movement of events. The helmsman obeyed the order, but the captain of the after-gun also obeyed what he thought was an order to him. The signal to engage was a shouted "Up guns!" Once that was heard it was up to the gun-captains to get their guns up in the quickest possible time, and to open fire as soon as their sights covered the target. Hearing the "Up, up!" the gun-captain naturally thought it was to his address, and gave the word to slip the bottle-screws and throw clear the coverings of the after 12-pounder. The submarine was still something like three thousand five hundred yards away. Up came the after-gun, with the usual crash and thud of locking bolts; but before the gun-layer could bring the piece to bear, the C.O. was up and raving like a madman at all hands. We had disclosed our real identity without even a dog's chance of scuppering the enemy!

Here is an example of psychology. Allan, our C.O., had about thirty seconds—certainly not more—in which to make up his mind. There was just a fighting chance that the com-

mander of the U-boat had not seen the gun come up. Explaining it afterwards, the C.O. said—

"I don't think I ever thought quicker in my life, but I wasn't aware of thinking at all. All I knew was that I was blind mad against that fool of a gun-captain. But there was a sort of feeling that as there was a bit of spray knocking about, and as we were making heavy weather of it, Fritz mightn't have noticed what we were up to, so I thought it best to gamble on the off-chance, and ordered the gun to be housed again."

There was reason on the C.O.'s side. Look at a vessel of Brig X's tonnage from a distance of some three thousand yards through spray-dimmed binoculars, and say how many individual details you can pick out, remembering at the same time that your own ship is rolling savagely.

Whatever the German officer saw through his binoculars, it is evident that he did not see our camouflaged gun go up. Otherwise he would—following the usual practice—have approached us submerged until within torpedoing distance, and then have settled the matter out of hand by a well-directed "mouldy." As it was, he contented himself with a desultory gun-fire that must have cost his Government quite a lot of money, and injured us not at all.

But even so our position was anything but an enviable one. We knew quite well that his guns were heavier than ours, and that, owning the speed and agility of manœuvre that he did, he could sail in rings round us and choose precisely his position and moment of definite attack. We could do nothing beyond slug along like a crippled derelict. We could not even use our wireless to call for assistance, as, owing to Fritz's proximity, our signals would have reached his apparatus with a strength that must inevitably have disclosed the fact that we were equipped with wireless—and the average sailing coaster in the Mediterranean does not indulge in such expensive luxuries. It was an excellent opportunity to realise the limitations of a "Q" boat.

And there was, perhaps, some reason for the C.O.'s growl as I crawled aft to find company and to exchange opinions.

"I'd like to have one or two of those blasted longshore R.N. jokers here just now," he remarked bitterly. "The fellows that ask us if we're troubled with cold feet when we ask for a bigger gun to carry on with!" He spoke out of the deeps of rankling experience. He had protested not once but many times against the calibre of the guns with which we were equipped, asking for 4-inchers to replace the 12-pounders, because it was believed that no enemy submarine afloat was armed with anything less than a 22-pounder, whereas the majority of them carried 4·1 inch ordnance. But his requests had fallen on deaf ears systematically, and quite a number

of us serving in "Q" boats were strongly under the impression that the Navy proper had forgotten to declare war against Germany on August 4, 1914.

Because of the bedraggled state of our yards and sails, we were moving slowly and uncomfortably before the wind: a biggish target, and not in a position to retaliate, unless we forget the obligation we owed to other craft of our type.

It was apparent, too, that the men were getting restless. Ordinary "Q" boating they understood to the last word, but this indeterminate existence was rattling them a bit. Already stories had filtered through the various action positions as to what had happened, and these stories had not lost anything in transmission.

It was decided to make a visit to the stations and explain what had happened and what we hoped would happen; accordingly we left the deck, crawling circumspectly, and interviewed the men at close quarters. It was, perhaps, somewhat reprehensible to leave the deck under the circumstances, but I think our action was justified. At the forward 12-pounder the men had heard that a shell had pitched aboard, dismounted the after-gun, killed Captain and Navigator, and seriously wounded the First Lieutenant! Afterwards we wondered what sort of a story would have been told had Brig X been twice as long as she was.

Yes, our uncomfortable visit had a good effect: the gun-crews resigned themselves stoically to await events. Returning to the after upper-deck, we resolved to carry on as though the brig had actually been abandoned. So far as we could judge, the contretemps of the after 12-pounder had not been observed by the enemy.

Accordingly the brig was permitted to slog along half-aimlessly, as though crippled and generally affected in her personnel; and when another shell screamed near at hand, the C.O. gave the order—

"Hit amidships!" Brown, who was holding a sort of watching-brief between the wounded and his smoke-boxes, promptly ignited a smoke-box, and a splendid column of smoke ascended from our hull.

"That ought to fetch him," the C.O. said. But it failed to lure Fritz to the doom that was prepared for him. He refused to close to a nearer distance than two thousand yards, and even at that range persisted in moving swiftly and in circling about us. So that, after enduring this sort of thing for two solid hours, our patience wore thin, and we decided that the other brigs of our type might be able to look after themselves: that was their affair. Our immediate preoccupation was to put the wind up Fritz; and accordingly, Allan gave orders to get the guns up and open fire.

This was done; and although the erratic movements of the brig rendered precise shooting problematical, several rounds were fired at the submarine. My position, on opening fire, was aloft; and thither, in the

course of duty, I went. From the altitude of the topsail yard the submarine seemed very small and a very long way off; but, by contrast, the shot-hole in the sail above my head seemed large.

We got off seven rounds very quickly. Spotting for the fall of shot was anything but an easy matter, because the surface of the sea was badly ruffled by the breeze, and whitecaps were very plentiful; but such observations as were made were passed down to the gun-crews, and sighting corrections made accordingly.

To this day we are none of us certain that we actually hit Fritz. The gun-layers swore that they had done so; and I observed one splash that seemed to indicate that a shell had pitched about twenty-five yards short of the enemy's hull—and that, allowing for the rise in the ricochet, would certainly have got him; but the action was indeterminate. Fritz answered our fire — it was curious to notice the thin spit of his gun's discharge amongst the thrown-up spray—but after a while he quite obviously deemed discretion the better part of valour, and turned tail and went away on the surface at the top of his speed. We waited, but he vanished utterly in the direction of the land; and we decided unanimously that we had hit him so badly that he was unable to submerge; and we further prayed that he might arouse the interest of some of our steam patrols, which would know how to deal with him. A submarine on the surface is not nearly so sinister a thing as one submerged.

As soon as we were assured that Fritz had definitely broken off the engagement, the C.O. ordered a ration of rum to be served out to all hands. This was done, and the action was keenly appreciated, although the coxswain said that the accounting for the extra issue would be a difficult matter. The paymasters ashore would not be able to understand such a departure from precedent, he informed us; but we of the after-guard decided that, in the event of trouble arising, we would foot the bill ourselves. Considering the suspense the crew had been compelled to endure, they richly deserved a little refreshment of this nature. And what actually happened when the accounting took place was this: the stone jar from which the grog had been served was hit violently against a stanchion, and the broken pieces were presented as evidence of an accident. The official record, I believe, said that one jar of rum had been broken by the splinters of an enemy shell! Anyhow, the men got the drink, and it steadied their jangled nerves, and enabled them to endure the unpleasantness of seeing our wounded.

The dead petty officer was collected and sewn up in his hammock—here again Brown officiated stolidly—and after sunset we committed the man's remains to the deep.

A burial service at sea is always an impressive matter; it brings a scalding sensation to the eyes and a lumpiness to

the throat. This was no exception. Allan read the service very impressively; and I think we all thought that it was by the merest trick of Chance that we ourselves were not bundled up in that red-stained fragment of canvas.

As soon as was possible, we made preparations to alter Brig X's appearance, as a safeguard and as an added lure. Paint was mixed in large quantities, gear was got aloft, and as soon as darkness fell we busied ourselves strenuously. The boom foresail was got rid of and staysails were rigged to replace it, the main boom was altered, the entire outside of the hull was painted an entirely different colour, the name on the stern was changed; and by daylight we were a metamorphosed craft, shining aloft as to spars, with white cotton sails set, and a general suggestion of smartness everywhere, to prove that we were a "Blue-nose packet," hailing from Nova Scotia.

Once again, through lack of a qualified medical officer aboard, we were compelled to make for port, in order that our casualties might receive adequate attention. The sufferings of White were terrible, and there was so little that we could do to alleviate them, although we tried our utmost. Morphia was used freely—dangerously, I fear—but it is not at all a pleasant thing to sit by and witness a man's agony, knowing that you possess the means to lessen it, without endeavouring to release him from pain. The other casualties were trifling enough—mere flesh-wounds that answered to bathing and dressing—and the shell-shock cases answered to copious administrations of rum and the chaff of their shipmates; but we were gravely concerned about White, and every effort was made to get him to port, where proper attention could be secured. Course was shaped for Argostili, which was the nearest friendly port, considering the direction of the wind. Further, Argostili was one of the few havens into which we were permitted to enter. We were limited in this respect, as may be supposed: any place which was even suspected of harbouring potential spies was rigorously ruled out of our programme.

Here we found Brig Y, a later-commissioned ship than ourselves; a bigger ship, too, armed with a bonny 4-inch gun, with depth-charge throwers and all manner of contraptions. She had put in for water and fresh provisions, and her ward-room complement, sneaking aboard us after nightfall in approved "Q" fashion, expressed the firm belief that enemy submarines did not exist. They had been diligently scouring the seas for a period of two months and had not even had a false alarm.

We showed them—not without pride—such entries in our log-book as explained our various activities, and saw them turn slowly green with envy.

"If we'd only had the luck!" was the burden of their cry. "With our four-incher we could have spitchered that

fellow as easily as winking!" They were very keen on their bigger gun: it was, according to their accounts, the most accurate weapon ever cast or wound; history would be made with it at the appointed time.

Many months afterwards we met Brig Y again, and those cheerful souls aboard her were a chastened gathering. They had sighted a submarine; it approached them confidently on the surface, the sea was smooth, and the brig herself was as steady as a rock. At a thousand yards Brig Y got up her guns. The four-inch missed fire eight times, and the U-boat got away!

Still, meeting up with this companion brig showed us possibilities. The two skippers got their heads together and evolved an idea of cruising in company, giving an imitation of a couple of coasters hanging together for mutual protection. The plan was that, in the event of falling in with the enemy, it would be possible to turn a broadside of five guns on him in a few seconds; and surely, ran the argument, out of five guns some one or two would hit fatally!

Before we could play our part in the scheme, however, it was necessary to land our main casualty, and replace our shattered boat. White was a very sick man—only just alive, indeed, and suffering excruciating pain. The morphia was losing its bite, and we were glad for his sake as well as our own to get him ashore to the military hospital there, for more skilful treatment than we could give. In the event, White recovered sufficiently to be moved back to the Base, and at the moment of writing he is still alive, but still an invalid. It is doubtful if he will ever recover his early strength and vigour,—I dare not mention the number of shell-fragments that were extracted from his wounds.

Getting a boat to replace our lost one was not a simple matter. Such as offered were altogether unsuitable for our purpose: either they were too big and clumsy to be carried on our deck, or they were so rotten as to be entirely unseaworthy, although the prices demanded would have bought the latest thing in smart motor-launches, with nickeled fittings all complete. The boats which fitted our requirements were not for sale.

In the result, growing despairing, we stole one. It was a reprehensible thing to do, and I hope it will not be counted against our record; but we had no other alternative. Brig Y helped us in the nefarious work: it was her boat that towed the loot off to us after dark of the night prior to our sailing. With that stolen boat aboard we put to sea at the first glimmer of dawn, and commenced the next stage of our adventures.

*(To be continued.)*

# A BRANCH OF THE FAMILY.

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON.

## I.

SOME races seem to have been created for blending purposes. They appear in the dawn of history like a potent spirit, strong and heady; they pour into other lands, conquer, dominate—and are absorbed; and all that reappears in after centuries is a strain of singular qualities in the compound. The form of the conquerors—their institutions and social structure—has vanished; their soul alone seems to have been destined to survive.

On the shores of our own land, about twelve hundred years ago, shipload by shipload, the Vikings began to land, until at length they came by fleet-loads, and England had a dynasty of Danish kings. *Vid* Normandy they came again, and England had Norwegian kings; all the Western Isles of Scotland and parts of Ireland were Norse for centuries; the seaboard counties on the East of England were peopled by the Vikings; and at the end of it all, what outward resemblance is there to be seen to-day, or has there been for centuries past, between a British county and the Saga-lands of the North? About as much as between a pine-tree and an elm.

The spirit of those sea-rovers, accursed of all good and pious men, might still be found in this twentieth century beneath a periscope in the Baltic or on the bridge of a battle-cruiser hounding the same ancient prey across the Dogger Bank. There has even been preserved the same brief off-hand turn of speech that so puzzles other nations accustomed to refer to serious things in serious language. Hrodlaf explaining the chieftain Ingemund's death to his sorrowing friend in the happy phrase, "He was used as a target"; King Hakon just informed of his uncle's rebellion and awaking his young queen in the small hours of the morning to tell her casually "Small are the tidings; there are two kings in Norway at once"—seem to be acquaintances we have heard converse in many a smoking-room.

But the social system in which the Ingemunds and Hakons were reared—the whole relation of land to people and people to one another—stayed behind in the North. These adventurers seem to have been a people who took on the colour of their surroundings like a ptarmigan or an Arctic fox. Within two centuries the bearded chieftains who followed Rollo were shaven Norman knights, French, feudal, and sophisticated. The Norse conquerors of the Sudreyor appear presently as kilted Hebridean

dhuine-wassels. The descendants of King Sigtrygg of Dublin and his men spoke in a short space with the brogue of Brian Boru.

More or less of the old Northern blood still flows in the veins of most citizens of this kingdom, but as for the old Northern ways of life, one may search Great Britain through without finding more than here and there some fragment—a curious custom or the traces of a tenure—just visible under the microscope. To read such a picture of the ancient Icelandic society as is given by Dasent in his Introduction to 'Burnt Njal,' is to read of a society utterly and fundamentally different from anything this island has known for many a century.

But there are certain islands, now for more than four hundred years part of Scotland, and separated from her only by a few miles of restless water, where even to-day very plain vestiges of the old Norse society may be seen, and where, down to the middle of the sixteenth century, it was living under its own laws, a trifle ruinous but essentially unchanged. The Orkneys and Shetlands were among the first, possibly the very first, of the Viking colonies. For two centuries or so before their recorded history begins, their coasts had gradually been settled by the earliest adventurers. When their Saga opens, about 860, they had got an earl of their own (uncle of Rollo of Normandy), and under their own earls and laws, and their ancient constitution and system of land tenure, they lived a semi-independent life till they passed on mortgage to the Scottish Crown in 1468, and on mortgage they are still held by King George to-day.

So that there is one corner of Great Britain where even now may be seen things still existent which are Norse in all their essentials, and which when you look through them in the light of records, like gazing into a telescope, reveal vistas reaching right back to the Sagas. There you are in the actual land of the Vikings, where they lived for centuries undiluted by subject races, "carrying on" as they began in their northern homelands; and these vistas show how that sea-roving, free-speaking, liberty-loving society flourished for a space in spite of its defects, and decayed at last in spite of its virtues.

II.

The islands' past is not upon the surface. Driving along mile after mile of blue-grey Orkney road that dips and rises through stretches of green dotted with small farmsteads, wide moorland spaces on the one hand rising to a line of rounded hills, and on the other a long straggling loch or the shining island-set sea, no hedgerows or wood-

lands anywhere, and only a stunted tree or two occasionally to be seen under the lee of a low farm, the eye of the traveller looks a little hopelessly for some perceptible relic of the romantic Viking past.

The lichened stones that tower solitary above a field of corn, or stare silently at one another across a circle of moor, stood there for ages before the first Viking landed; nor does any record so much as corroborate the tradition that their descendants used them as their trysts when "*things*" and courts were held. Even at Tingwall, in Shetland, where a circle of great stones are very specifically stated by report to have marked the site of the old Lawthing, the earliest actual record of that court shows it sitting in 1307 beneath the roof of Tingwall Kirk.

The brochs—those strong towers of stone whose stumps form the kernel of mound after mound in every parish, and, where the spade has been at work, show a grey rim of fortalice, were built and lived in and deserted by a race who fled before the Northman or fell beneath his sword.

The rare ruins of an ancient gabled or castellated manor-house, very occasionally found in the islands, can always be traced to some sixteenth- or seventeenth-century local magnate; and, apart from churches, the only buildings at all of earlier date than that still standing were the creation of bishops—imposing people, but somewhat flavourless when one is looking for Vikings.

Still more rarely nowadays, long low farmhouses with fireplaces in the middle of the floor and a smoke-hole in the roof above may be discovered by the curious inquirer; but any practical mason could tell him, from a glance at the loose ramshackle walls, that these relics can never have weathered more than a century or two of Orkney gales. As old buildings go, they are in fact merely wizened-looking youths.

And yet, right under the curious inquirer's eye, for mile upon mile on either side of the road he is driving along, lies the very thing he looks for. He would probably be still more disappointed if he were told what it is, and that that is all he could hope to see; still, there the legacy of the Vikings is, unsensational though it be.

This undramatic feature can be seen from some roads quite distinctly. Driving northwards, for instance, from the shores of Scapa Flow into the heart of the Mainland of Orkney, the country for miles is a patchwork of alternate brown and green. The road runs through a district of small farms, with a loch on one side and moors on every other; across the loch lies another and separate large green patch; then comes heather on either side of the road; and then again, at the head of the valley, a fertile slope; over the watershed lies the moorland vale of Summerdale,

where the Caithness men bit the dust four centuries ago; and then the road winds through green fields till it reaches the heather on the farther side.

Keeping ever northwards, this goes on for several miles, till at last the green all runs together. But even here a traveller fifty years ago would have seen the same thing. Only the districts lay closer, and now they have joined company; and, except in some of the North Isles and a few parts of the Mainland, this is what one finds all over the Orkneys: the arable lands still lying in patches of, say, 200 to 400 acres, or else the patches have run together of comparatively recent years. And these arable patches or districts are still distinct entities, termed in Orkney "towns" or "townships."

Occasionally one large farm will dominate such a township, still more rarely it will simply consist of one farm; but in the vast majority of cases small irregular fields are sprinkled fairly regularly with clusters of low buildings, sometimes quite bare, sometimes huddling under a belt of bourtrees, or—of late years—even boasting a sycamore or rowan or two. There may be four or five; there may be a dozen, or, in exceptional cases, even more such modest farms.

Constantly, if you watch closely, you will see in the outskirts of these green towns a fragment of an odd sort of wall, a dyke of turf and heather sloping to an apex at the top and now very much dilapidated. Sometimes one even gets a suggestive glimpse of a long stretch of one of these turf dykes curving round the outskirts of the fields like a protecting boundary (which it once was). And another feature to be seen now and then is the great mound that holds the remnants of a broch.

If the intelligent inquirer were to study a large-scale map, he would occasionally notice among the names of these modest farms one with a very imposing sound, "The Hall" of Yenstay or Ireland, or whatever the township was called; or it might bear the mysterious designation of "the Bu" of the town, and he would probably wonder how the modest farm came by such a high-sounding title. These names are met with seldom nowadays, but if our inquirer were to wade for a few weeks through the Register of Sasines he would find that in the seventeenth century "the House of So-and-So" ("So-and-So" being the name of the whole township) was a very common feature. Many a township had its "house" or "head house," occasionally also called "the manor-house," and the Halls and Bus to-day are the survivors of this once large family.

How this township system of land-cultivation came into existence in the precise form it assumed in Orkney seems distinctly hinted at by the constant presence either of a broch or what was once the site of one in the midst of the

town, and by the term "picka-dyke" once applied to the turf wall which bounded it. A Pictish system taken over by the invading Northmen is decidedly suggested, though unfortunately the Saga is too busied with the exploits of the sea-roving earls to trouble about such pacific details as that.

But once the Norsemen were settled in the isles and the begetters of the system were fled or dead or slaves, the history of the towns and the Viking people who lived in them can be traced from saga, charter, doom of court, and inference from many things observed, right down from the heroic age of warring jarls and chieftains to uneventful yesterday. One such history, the annals of the town and family of Stourgarth, may serve to epitomise the whole story of what happened all over this Viking archipelago.

It is an absolutely true story in the sense that every incident certainly happened to one of these ancient township families, only as written records of an early date are rare and precious things in Orkney (owing to dampness, carelessness, and a dozen other nesses), no family and no township has been left with a continuous history of its own. We get here a glimpse of this family, and there a glimpse of that, till about the beginning of the sixteenth century, when we have a flood of light on a great many of them at once. Their resemblance to one another at that time is so marked that one knows they must have travelled by the same road, and that it is quite safe to piece together the head of one family and the body of another, and the legs of a third, and call the whole a type. This sketch in short is an accurate history of a type—a kind of composite photograph.

III.

Before the time of the chieftain Biorn (*floruit circa* A.D. 1050) the island history is a little too sketchy for certitude in domestic details, so the story of Stourgarth must begin with him. Where the unostentatious farm of Netherhouse now stands—on the left-hand bank of the burn just where it falls into the sea, and where the good dark earth is said to be of fabulous depth—stood in *circa* 1050 the Hall of Biorn. The whole township was one farm pertaining to the hall, the "bu" or manor of Stourgarth. On one or two odd patches near the boundary dyke (a high rampart in those days) a cottar had his cot, but the entire lands and their stock served to keep in meat and drink the household in the hall — the family, odd kinsmen dwelling with them, and a host of servants free and unfree.

The town lay along the coast, rising gently from the burn on either side and ceasing where the ancient Pictish

people had deemed the land no longer worth breaking out. Beyond the dyke was deep soft heather, save by the banks of the burn where rough snipe-haunted meadows straggled, in summer all pink and blue and yellow with wild flowers, in winter under water half the time. A little farther up the burn began the smaller, steeper-sloping town of Lingsetter, another "bu" of Biorn's, and beyond that the hills rose to meet the skyline, and the burn flowed in a bracken-banked dell down from its springs.

In front of the township the sea glimmered on fine days and beat in grey incessant waves on foul, the brown and green islands beyond sometimes shining like gems, sometimes lost in a clammy haar. The pipings and cries of sea-birds were never silent, the scent of the seaweed was always in the air, and the low skyline and vast expanse of sky gave an extraordinary sense of space and width, so that in that dwelling on the water's edge you felt half on sea and half on shore.

The hall itself was long and steep-roofed, with great fires burning down the middle and benches alongside them and across one end, and weapons hung upon the walls between the red and green embroidered curtains that hid the doorways of the sleeping chambers (which were like small state-rooms with one berth). Other steep-roofed buildings flanked it — kitchen and women's apartments and stables and byres and barn—but there was never a sign of tower or parapet or bastion or any sort of fortification; for though Biorn lived too soon to study the works of Captain Mahan, he realised perfectly that sea-power spells security. It is true that an evil-tempered neighbour (annoyed perhaps by noticing the spear of Biorn's brother-in-law in the body of his second cousin) might put a torch to the hall some dark night—and it was constructed to burn very readily, but a man was scarcely to be called a man who took too elaborate precautions to avoid an odd risk like that.

Also, such an accident was hardly likely to befall a chieftain of the great Earl Thorfinn, conqueror of the Scot King, friend of Macbeth, and ruler of nine earldoms in Scotland, all the Southern Isles, and a great realm in Ireland. War abroad but peace at home, and an iron hand in both, was the great Earl's rule and practice.

Too much peace and any idleness were the lord of Stourgarth's chief aversions. When his Earl was on the war-path he followed him; when he was not, he made a little voyage each summer on his own account, sailing in a long shallow ship with a terrible effigy on the prow that looked like a serpent crossed with a dragon, in company with his own private band of picked retainers, and any neighbour who cared to risk a reckless life and invest a sharp sword in a thoroughly sporting venture.

Before he sailed, he and the retainers worked like Trojans on his "bu" getting the seed in, and after he came back they worked still harder getting the harvest in. Conscientious drinking, peg to peg with any challenger, and strenuous athletics (he was a noted exponent of football played under a breezy code that generally left a good deal of blood on the pitch), kept idleness afar through the long tempestuous nights and short dark days of winter; while various odd times were filled in by what a critical modern would probably distinguish as his duties. To Biorn each item of his programme was equally incumbent on a self-respecting gentleman, and this last he would himself have distinguished merely as the least entertaining.

The great Earl till his latter days lived mostly in his realm of Caithness, and over the isles he "set up his men." Biorn was one of these set up, and, keeping watch and ward himself, "settling cases between men" within the district under him, and riding or sailing each spring to the great annual *thing* or parliament of all the island chieftains, were the duties. He did them as thoroughly as he did everything else, not favouring his own kinsfolk too unduly—yet remembering that blood was thicker than water, even if the law had to be strained a trifle, standing no nonsense from the common sort and very little from the great, and respecting the liberty of the subject so long as the subject respected him.

In appearance this conscientious Viking magnate had been remarkably prepossessing till a battle-axe came in contact with his helmet and twisted both nose-piece and nose—the latter permanently. He still remained a rare specimen of the upstanding, blue-eyed, fine-featured, yellow-bearded type; and the twisted nose, if it impaired his beauty, gave him a very formidable aspect. Being, like all his race, a humorist, he was in the habit of cracking many jokes—generally rather grim—at the expense of this blemish, and answered to the sobriquet "Crooked-nose" with infinite relish. It took him, he felt, a step nearer the little band of immortals whose exploits should be sung for generations after they were gone. In fact, it struck him as an epithet specially designed for a heroic couplet.

In addition to his warlike and administrative virtues, he was also an authority on matters of pedigree, particularly his own, tracing himself to a giant with two heads who had come from Turkey twenty-six generations previously, and knowing precisely in what cousinage he stood (fourth, sixth, or tenth) to a distinguished baronial house in Normandy, two or three bekilted Hebridean chiefs, a Norwegian earl, an Icelandic chieftain who had recently achieved notoriety by burning no fewer than sixteen of his most inconvenient neighbours in

one house, and several other celebrities.

One grave misfortune overtook Biorn Crooked-nose at the end, and perhaps even impaired his chances of immortality. The worst of an all-conquering, strong-handed potentate like Earl Thorfinn is undoubtedly a tendency for peace to follow for a space upon his conquests, and to the confounding of his dearest hopes Biorn died on a sick-bed, "like a woman" he bitterly lamented. He gave himself every chance of avoiding this fate by following Thorfinn's sons to Stamford Bridge, and fighting on that disastrous day till he was left with the hilt of his sword in his hand, and two-thirds of his shield on his arm; but even the Saxon axes failed to kill him, and he sailed home again with the young earls to meet his end between the sheets.

IV.

Seven days thereafter happened something which to all concerned was a mere matter of course, but which to the wise-after-the-event seems a plain finger-post pointing to the downward path along which that old Viking society, as Biorn knew it, was doomed surely and inevitably to pass. It took the outward form of a meeting at the hall, of his heirs and a small selection of wise and weighty men, with a background of tables laid and flagons filled. After due deliberation the wise and weighty men divided (in accordance with the law) the whole estate of Biorn, lands and goods and chattels, equally between his three tall sons. Thorkell as eldest chose the head bu of Steurgarth. The bu of Lingsetter went to the second, and another bu in another district to the third. With his share Thorkell took a few small farms; with theirs the brothers took a larger slice of the profits of old Biorn's overseas ventures; and three diminished chieftains appeared instead of one great chief.

By an unfortunate coincidence, which tended to perpetuate this result, the happy hunting-grounds of the gentlemen adventurers were by this time getting circumscribed. Some had been looted bare, in others Viking bands had settled and knew too much about the game, and in others again energetic kings and counts had taken inconvenient steps to guard their coasts; while, to add to the gentleman adventurer's handicap, he had somewhat thoughtlessly turned Christian, and his priest was beginning to expostulate with him on awkward moral grounds. These causes between them absolutely killed Vikingism in Norway and Denmark about this time; but whether it was that the Orkney adventurer was more persevering, or less priest-ridden, or simply nearer temptation, he certainly followed

the footsteps of his fathers for a generation or two longer. But even he followed them less regularly and less profitably, until at last an Orkney landowner who went a-roving was regarded as exceedingly old-fashioned, much as a squire to-day would be who still dined at six o'clock.

Had Thorkell and his spouse been so careless of the future of his house as to rear up half a dozen sons, a very serious strain would have been put upon its position in the world. But fortunately for its continued dignity, they lived in an age of many accidents, when lives stopped abruptly and funerals were frequent. Two sons died in infancy for want of a medicine-man, and another through calling one in. A fourth died of a spear-thrust, and a fifth of drowning, so that when Thorkell joined his fathers, Generation III. was represented by a single heir, and the estate had a respite from the wise and weighty men.

Number Three was a very proper man — most chieftain-like, all were agreed. He crusaded to Jerusalem with the famed Earl Rognvald, and returned bearing himself with a grace learned in Mediterranean courts, attired in fashionable foreign garments that were the envy of all beholders when he displayed himself in the new Cathedral of St Magnus. A wealthy bride and a lucky voyage or two with Sweyn Asleifson, last of the Vikings, left his sons a handsome patrimony to divide, and though the wise and weighty returned to the hall, the estate stood the shock.

But luck like that could not last for ever. Such a family based on such an estate must inevitably dwindle, slowly perhaps but certainly. Feudalism had its defects, but it was a rare cement, and this Norse society was absolutely without it. The Earl had his private estates, and these he might set on tack, but he never granted them by charter. The gifts of the pious and the forfeitures of the wicked steadily swelled the Church lands to great dimensions, but they were jealously reserved for the Kirkmen. The Odal landowners, these freemen holding their estates of hereditary right acquired from no man but their own ancestors, some of them wealthy and high-born like the early lords of Stourgarth, some small farmers: rich and poor, they all saw their lands, the whole basis of their being, gradually crumble away, though probably so very gradually they hardly realised what was happening.

On the other hand, as every member of every family had rights in his ancestral property, which he could only extinguish by selling them himself, and which he had to offer in the first place to his kinsmen, these estates were held on such a strict entail that though the individual might grow poorer, the estate as a whole could hardly escape from the family even if it

tried—at least not if it were of much value. And so century after century passing by found the descendants of the old houses still on the old acres.

V.

A little something is on record concerning most of the generations of this ancient family, but as they are not as a rule particulars that would be apt to satisfy the general taste in matters of family history (which has learned to demand more ghosts, duels, elopements, and missing wills than the Stourgarth annals supply), the present chronicler proposes to edit them severely. An item here and an item there through the centuries betwixt the twelfth and the twentieth may serve, however, to explain that quiet countryside through which the long road passes to-day, and why the sheriff has not above one case of manslaughter a generation before him.

Numbers Four, Five, and Six (Bjorn II., Magnus, and Thorkell II.) lived and died in their native isles, but Number Seven, Sigmund Thorkellson, or Sigmund Squint, as he was indifferently styled, was one of a host who made a famous voyage—that last great sailing of the Northern Navies across the west seas. The long ships steered in their hundreds through the Pentland Firth and the Hebridean Sounds, shields glittering along their gunwales, and coloured sails and fluttering flags above, till they met the equinoctial gales off the Ayrshire coasts, and a few of them at last had the luck to be in that fierce skirmish which legend has since converted into the famous Battle of Largs. There Sigmund with the squint laid on like a man, and from thence he steered his ship tortuously past iron coasts and through autumnal seas back to the old hall on the shore. And with the home-coming of that navy the sovereignty of the seas passed from those northern captains (though little they guessed it then) to their kinsmen on the great island to the south.

Number Ten is worth a passing reference owing to his name. It was Thomas: a good enough name in itself, but, after Biorn Crooked-nose and Sigmund Squint, a little like sound filtered water after port. It was given him because it was the name of an Apostle, and his mother was a pious lady; and it marked a stage in the island story. So did the name of Number Eleven (*floruit circa* 1390); only this time it was the surname that was significant. After the Scottish fashion, he took his estate as his surname, and though his hair was red and his father's name was Thomas, he was known neither as Magnus Ginger (or Norse words to that effect) nor Magnus Thomason, but as Magnus

Stourgarth. And as the flood of Scottish fashions grew even stronger, his descendants never cast back, but remain Stourgarths to this day.

Number Fourteen is chiefly remarkable for having been buried beneath a tombstone with a coat-of-arms upon it, which, owing to its being almost completely weathered away, has considerably embittered the local antiquaries, some maintaining that it represents a volcano in eruption, and others the head of a hitherto undiscovered mammal. Owing to this discrepancy of opinion, the precise armorial bearings of the family remain in some obscurity.

It was either in the time of this Fourteen or of his successor (Alexander Stourgarth of that Ilk) that the family demesne of Stourgarth was at length split asunder. The ancient laws as administered by the wise and weighty men divided everything else, but of the Head Bu only the profits were shared, not the lands, and the eldest son sat there. But by this time each son was getting his slice of earth, and so two new houses arose—one at the top of the township, styled the Upperhouse or Appihouse, and one below it, the Midhouse; while the old house of Stourgarth became henceforth generally known as the Netherhouse.

As to the inhabitants of these houses, the confusion between the various portioners of Stourgarth has left a series of conundrums that no genealogist may solve, and the only compensation for the misfortunes that now began to overtake these portioners is that in this matter things became a little clearer through their successive declines and falls. The portioner of Upperhouse left two daughters whose spouses both elected to reside upon the estate, and hence the Upperhouse became the Upperbigging; for in the islands a bigging means more than one where houses are concerned. Thereafter both grandsons simultaneously bonded their shares to an obliging lawyer, and a few years later that portion had departed from the old race.

Just over 300 years ago was a time of tyranny and extortion in the island history, which tradition still paints black to this day. The laird of Midhouse was first unjustly condemned for removing a march-stone, and his property was gripped by the Earl. Then he was illegally pardoned, and received it back on payment of considerably more than its price; and after this unfortunate gentleman's death, his family of seven sold the retrieved estate by means of seven separate charters, which the same obliging lawyer assured the parties were quite essential, and thereby pocketed seven fees.

Alone of the three, the old mansion still housed its founder's race beneath its dilapidated roof. So dilapidated, in fact, was the whole dwelling that it was replaced on a smaller scale and in materials which succumbed to the winters still

more readily. Yet again it was replaced, and yet again it crumbled, its old title of the House of Stourgarth growing all the while less appropriate through these changes, till no one knew it as other than merely the Netherhouse. And all the while its owners grew less and less "of that Ilk" and more and more pacific, workaday contrasts to Biorn of the Crooked-nose and the resplendent Crusader. And thereby, most probably, they still cling to their remaining acres.

VI.

Some years ago the Netherhouse was again rebuilt, this time with the best lime and a good slate roof, and one window that opens and three that would if you scraped away the varnish, and a cottage piano in the parlour overlooked by almost all the Royal Family, Admiral Jellicoe, and the presidents of the Christian Union and the Licensed Victuallers Association. The present Mr Andrew Stourgarth, the proprietor of this mansion, is a gentleman much interested in agriculture and very little in antiquities. He has done very well all along, especially with his eggs and butter, and during the war has developed into an extremely prosperous person. If you ask him about his family history, he will apologise for the absence of his grandfather, who knew more about these matters than any man of his generation, but who has unfortunately been dead for the last thirty years; and then he will probably inquire about the crops in your own part of the country.

Mr Stourgarth is, in short, a very practical and a very peaceable sort of person, and he brought up his sons on the most practical and peaceable principles. And yet there must have been a germ of something not altogether prosaic and not quite pacific in the blood, for the sons have not answered to expectations. Private Stourgarth is now Captain Stourgarth, D.S.O., and Skipper Stourgarth went west in a Mystery Ship whose end was a mystery too.

Possibly a hint of this germ was to be seen in the aforesaid grandfather, who had a strange fancy for unpractical lore, and in the fighting line was said to be a match for any two men when he was sober and any three when he was drunk. But, learned in family history as this legendary ancestor was, he would scarcely have been equal to the job of tracing his precise relationship to certain distant cousins who began to arrive in the isles in indubitably long ships—very long and low and black—one calm and shining day in late July. Through the sea fog on the morning after they were coming in their thousands, this time in vast vessels that would have been deemed by Biorn and the Crusader (and perhaps actually were deemed, if their

spirits still haunt the shores) to be islands broken loose. Even the grandfather would have been deceived and dubbed them strangers.

And still more at a loss would he have been to discover how he stood towards a certain party of thin, rather pale young men, with a strange note in their voices and a uniform a little unfamiliar, who appeared one day like beneficent apparitions and gave his grandson such a price as (thought Andrew) twelve eggs had never fetched on this globe before. He knew from this princeliness who they must be—democrats from the New World, and sea-fighters also to trade, who had come across to take a hand in the game. As a matter of fact, they followed that trade because they were kinsmen and the spirit was born in them; though Andrew, who read the papers very intelligently, ascribed it merely to the commands of their President (Wilson by name and peremptory by nature, so far as he could make of the man). No doubt this imperious statesman had in fact laid his injunctions on the young men, but how much or how little use it would have been to enjoin the wrong race to fight upon the sea became evident enough before this armada sailed at last away, their business completed.

For four long years and a little more the heirs of the ancient sea spirit of the North anchored in the same old bays, and steered out through the same old tideways to give their foes the same old uncomfortable sensation. So uncomfortable did it become at last that on a November morning another fleet came in—a pitiable string of things that had been warships, with a cowed horde of what once were fighting men aboard. That procession was the final test of the blood. No kinsmen of Biorn and Rollo were ever herded home quite so like bullocks for the fair! But without the inheritance, what could they do at sea against the heirs?

# THE INFANT.

BY M. H. M.

## I.

WHEN Hercules Jervis sat in state at a select party in his honour at the Savoy, before leaving England to take up a high-sounding colonial appointment, he adopted a gracious tone towards those lesser beings whom he was leaving behind to enjoy the flesh-pots of London, what time he guided the Children of Ham in the way they should go. He even unbent to give dignified but non-committal acquiescence (in the true official manner) to the half-jesting, half-envious comparisons drawn between "polishing a stool" in London and "bossing niggers" in Africa.

. . . . . .

A week or so spent among fellow-sufferers upon a ship rather dulled the rosy vistas that had formed themselves in his brain. But Hercules—despite the idiocy of his godfathers and godmothers in baptism—was by no means a fool. With open ears and shut mouth he gleaned many things, thereby acquiring merit in the eyes of the older men.

Followed a period in a large and none too friendly town. There he learnt the utter minuteness of the newly joined, and saw the very great gulf that was fixed between the Great and the Small.

When released from his duties he had not infrequently to jump right swiftly to avoid being run over by corpulent, coloured Crœsuses, elaborately clad, perfumed and patent leathered, who lolled arrogantly, cigar in mouth, in furiously driven motor-cars, and cursed vehemently any luckless white man who had the temerity to walk upon the roads required for their bombastic progress.

However, a friendly senior, who had constituted himself mentor to the Infant Hercules—as obviously he was called—reassured him that there existed a magic place called "The Bush," wherein the white man came to his own, and where was to be found a camaraderie in which all white men were accepted on their merits.

Wherefore his spirits rose and his step was as upon air when one morning he was summoned into the presence of his chief, to be informed that he was to repair forthwith to a certain frontier. Well might he pat himself upon the back, and glowing were his letters to England, for appointments to the frontier were usually considered the plum of the junior service. Furthermore, that one so inexperienced had been selected showed that those in authority had observed possibilities in the Infant. On the other hand, they might have taken so great a dislike

to him that he was to be sent to as remote a situation as possible. There are always two sides to everything—one's own and one's enemies'.

Behold him a few days later about to say good-bye to his chief. He had dressed with extra care that morning, for his turn-out had been a matter of much harrowing thought. He was in the very latest thing in "bush kit." A khaki shirt, with military pockets and sleeves cut short in the approved fashion, and a khaki tie to match, covered his upper man; while khaki shorts, beautifully folded puttees, and highly-polished brown boots completed the picture. Around his waist was girt just such a belt as is seen only in illustrated catalogues advertising "everything for the colonies." Thick and heavy, it supported—

(*a*) One service revolver (loaded) and ammunition-pouch (full).
(*b*) One prismatic compass.
(*c*) One traveller's pocket-companion — whatever that may be.
(*d*) One hunting-knife.
(*e*) One map in a leather case.

Over his shoulder was slung a large canvas haversack, bulging with oddments, and in his hand was a heavy shooting-stick.

Hercules paused outside his chief's door, allowing the admiring glances of the native clerks to rest upon him. All the while he was worrying over the great problem that had exercised his brain ever since he had left his quarters. Should he, or should he not, salute? Finally he compromised by greeting his chief with the usual "Good morning, sir," but stood stiffly to attention.

Now the Honourable Reneuf Buffett, C.M.G., was a kindly man; furthermore, he had not yet forgotten the time when he himself had been as young and as green as the enthusiastic youngster standing before him. So with twinkling eyes he chatted for a few moments, then, wishing him good luck, nodded dismissal.

Hercules could not quite make out the curious sound that he heard as he shut the door behind him.

Garraway, the kindly senior before mentioned, had promised to see the Infant and his belongings safely disposed upon the small coasting steamer in which he was to journey to his new station. To the home-bred mind this does not seem any great task: visions of neatly-labelled portmanteaux or barrows, intelligent porters in conspicuous uniforms, and other benefits of civilisation leap before the eye. In tropical lands, however, a portmanteau would make an epicurean repast for the always hungry cockroach and his other little friends. The uniformed porter and barrow give place to a horde of yelling labourers, semi-naked, sweating and mightily odorous, who carry ("tote" we call it) your property on their heads. The benefits of civilisation more often than not embrace several highly educated (*sic*) and usually obtuse

native clerks, who, not being in Government employ, delight in "humbugging" such officials as are unfortunate enough to have dealings with them. On top of all this, the time and place of one's departure is often unknown until the last moment.

Wherefore Hercules was truly grateful to the thoughtful Garraway, more especially when, on leaving his chief, he found a message to the effect that as the time of sailing had suddenly been altered, he had better make haste; and, moreover, that the steamer was alongside No. 11 wharf instead of No. 3, as he had previously been told. "Don't worry; I've got all your gear aboard," concluded the note; wherefore, as already mentioned, Hercules was more than grateful to the thoughtful Garraway.

Unconscious of the stares of frank amazement which were directed at his attire from all sides, Hercules hastened on board. There he found Garraway indulging in a cocktail with the skipper and two other men, who were introduced as his fellow-passengers. They also stared open-mouthed at the apparition, and with one accord departed hastily outside lest they should explode with pent-up mirth. Garraway took the neophyte aside.

"Look here, Old Man, I don't want to be rude, but I should shed that kit at once if I were you."

"Why? Isn't this the right thing for the bush?"

"Excellent when you get there, though you don't want all those guns and things. But you aren't in the bush yet, and won't be for three days. I should change, if I were you."

"Thanks awfully. I must look a fearful ass," admitted Hercules.

"You do, rather," agreed Garraway. "Never mind; we all do odd things at first."

Hercules changed, while Garraway finished his cocktail and asked the skipper not to pull his leg too much, and to help him with his stuff at the other end. To this the sailor good-naturedly agreed.

"Good-bye, Old Man. Good luck!" said Garraway, as Hercules reappeared. "I must be off now. Give my chin-chins to the Badger!"

II.

The Infant was delighted with the cordial welcome he received from the D.C. and the doctor where he landed, both of whom fortunately happened to be in the station at the time. Then, having left his heavier belongings in store to be recovered later, he trekked two long days in the bush to meet his senior officer.

Behold them, then, each lying stretched on long canvas chairs in the coolest corner of a spacious mud-house. The Infant—we will conform to the usage of the country of

his bondage — the Infant, being on his first trek, had not known to avoid the heat of the day by starting in the early hours of the morning, but had pushed on with his carriers, sweating profusely, but enjoying every minute of his new life. Now he had reached the blissful stage when fatigue gives place to repose, and when, bootless and sockless, his thirst partially quenched, he could lie back and smoke, every muscle of his body relaxed.

In such fashion the two men studied one another, each puffing silently at his pipe. At the outset Brough, a perfect host, had procured for his visitor liquor, tobacco, and a comfortable seat. Then having ordered a boy to remove the Infant's boots and to produce some slippers for him, he had relapsed into silence, allowing the traveller more fully to enjoy the delicious sense of complete idleness after strenuous exertion.

Over tea he became more talkative—eager for news, and willing to answer the hundred and one questions with which he was bombarded. He noted with pleasure that, far from being one of the unpleasant class of omniscient young men of the world, his new pup much more resembled an eager and enthusiastic schoolboy.

"I'm afraid you must have found the journey rather trying, Jervis," he said, lighting the post-prandial pipe. "It takes a little while to learn how to trek."

"Not a bit, sir," was the reply. "I enjoyed it all; besides, I wanted to get here—I had heard such a lot about the frontier work."

"Ah!" grunted Brough, and went back into his shell.

Julius Brough was a man of moods. To the world at large, as represented by his brother officials, he was known as a queer card. A great lover of nature and simple living, he loathed society (with either a big or a little S), and was frightened to death in ladies' drawing-rooms. He was therefore in his element in the back of beyond. He invariably dressed in the oldest and most disreputable garments, smoking incessantly the vilest tobacco out of the foulest of pipes. Well educated, a brilliant talker when interested, he knew the native as well, if not better, than almost any one in the country. True, the European mind may not be able to penetrate far into that of the savage, but such insight as was possessed by Brough is a most enviable possession.

Some years before he had been banished from the ken of man on account of his social failings. A coat he would not wear unless he was cold, a collar was abomination. Once on his own, all his talents had come to the front, with the result that in a very short time the frontier service had become a living institution.

All these things had been carefully noted by Mr Renouf Buffett, who was one of the very few who knew the real

Brough. Wherefore, having the interests of the Administration nearer to his heart than any gave credit, he selected for frontier service, not the social failures, but the most promising of his recruits. He had once remarked to a Secretary of State that men trained by Brough would in time do great things—because

(*a*) Brough would not take the trouble to suffer a fool, and

(*b*) No man who had served long under Brough—for fools were returned to Mr Buffett by the first steamer—could fail to assimilate many of his qualities; and a man who could completely satisfy Brough was capable of settling the Irish Question.

Notwithstanding all this, Brough had reached a certain point in the service, and knew well that he would never go any further. Several years previously he had waited upon a Great Man in his usual attire, his foulest pipe in full blast, and had spoken his mind to that Superior Person. Hence Brough was damned, despite all the efforts of Mr Buffett and the few other large-minded persons who, knowing his great worth, could make allowances for his idiosyncrasies.

For the next few days the Infant followed meekly in the wake of his superior, trying without much success to grasp what was going forward. He noticed with pleasure that beyond the collection of import dues and the monthly payment of the staff, there was little or none of the routine work of a big headquarter office—most of his work would be out of doors.

He was abruptly informed by Mr Brough on the first morning after his arrival that, until he knew the tariff backwards and the frontier regulations from A to Z, he was completely useless, and that until he could speak a language he was very nearly so. Wherefore he strove diligently to rectify his defects.

He noticed that Mr Brough neither praised nor abused—that he would explain a point with the utmost patience until he had obtained an admission that it was thoroughly understood. But he never explained anything twice to the same person. To ask for a second exposition was to court a snub. To ask a third time meant a free ticket to headquarters labelled useless. Few, however, risked a snubbing from Mr Brough.

At the end of a month Hercules had begun to feel that he was mastering the first principles of his new duties. He had learnt how the more common of the regulations worked, and how most of the duties were assessed, and also where to find his chapter and verse for the less obvious points. Brough had gone away several times during the month, each time delegating a little more responsibility to his subordinate. This the Infant greatly ap-

preciated, enjoying most of all the training of the frontier police force, which devolved on him in due season. They were trained as soldiers, and were picked both for their physique and their natural intelligence. Many spoke English, though this was discouraged, as all the frontier officers were expected to speak the native languages as far as possible. Hercules blessed the four years spent in his school cadet corps when he heard that he was to take charge of this force.

All this time Brough, though friendly enough out of hours, had strictly maintained the rôle of a senior officer, giving orders and occasional advice when circumstances demanded. He had never become at all confidential, preferring first to take the Infant's measure.

At length after three months he came out of his official shell.

III.

One evening the Infant, on his way shooting, heard himself hailed.

"Hullo, Infant, going shooting?" shouted Brough from the verandah of his house.

"I was, sir, unless you want me."

"Not a bit. Come in for a drink when you get back. Good hunting!"

Preceded by an orderly with his gun, he passed through the village towards the farms where he intended to shoot. As he went along a mental tattoo brisked his steps. "Brough called me Infant! Brough called me Infant!" Was the world coming to an end, or what? Never before had Mr Brough deviated from the stereotyped Jervis or Mr Jervis. Now he had called him Infant!

Having accounted for a couple of brace of bush-fowl, he returned well pleased with himself, and joined Brough, who was sitting outside his house. Drinks were mixed and tobacco lighted.

"Well, how do you like the frontier, Infant?"

(Infant again! So his ears had not been wrong before.)

"I think it's a most fascinating job, sir," he answered. "But I'm afraid I shall never pick it up properly."

"Oh, that will come in time," was the encouraging reply. "Meanwhile, not so much of your 'Sir.' I'm Brough unadulterated to my Section Officers, Sir to probationers."

"Thank you," answered the Infant fervently.

He was dying to ask what Brough had meant about Section Officers, but he knew that he would be informed when it suited that man of mystery. Brough, who was waiting for the eager question, was by no means disappointed when the Infant held his peace.

Then he began to talk about the frontier as only Brough could. Though he spoke in a matter-of-fact manner, his tre-

mendous interest and enthusiasm was scarcely hidden beneath the terse sentences. From that conversation the Infant learnt more of the man than years of official intercourse would have disclosed; and he began to see the frontier through Brough's eyes, and to be filled with the "frontier instinct."

He was told how the frontier was split up. Arak was the most southerly of the four sections, but consisting of a country full of creeks and swamps, and lacking in any large trading towns, it was the least important. Lying as it did nearest to headquarters, Brough had made it his base. The next two sections saw the bulk of the smuggling that took place. The fourth and most northerly was quite unimportant, being situated in a huge desert. This was controlled by a semi-independent native state, to the ruler of which the revenue collected belonged.

"You will have to take over the Nobogodi section from young Sturrock when he goes on leave next month."

The Infant's face lit up as he faltered his thanks: this was good news indeed. Allowing him time to become normal again, Brough began to talk about Nobogodi.

"You will find that there is a good deal of petty smuggling pretty well everywhere, Infant. Don't worry yourself about it, but just sit heavily on any one you are able to catch. You couldn't stop it even if you had enough police to stand shoulder to shoulder all along your line. You will find the people an awfully sporting lot of blackguards. They are damn good hunters, and will show you any amount of shooting. But they will smuggle: it's in their blood. You will have quite a lot of fun with them!"

The Infant went to bed that night with his mind a whirl of secret agents, collectors, summonses, and various other mysteries that had been revealed to him; but notably one Mahmoud. Mahmoud had been a sergeant in Brough's police, who, having been dismissed and imprisoned for taking bribes, had settled down when released on the other side of the frontier, just out of reach. There he made a very profitable business out of "running" goods for any merchant who would pay him his price, which was not small, and also by informing on any venturous ones who were stiff-necked enough to attempt to do business on their own. In this way he not only made money whatever happened, but contrived to keep competition down to the minimum.

He was apparently a gentleman of no small originality and resource; and having a sound inside knowledge of the methods of the frontier authorities at first hand (doubtless also a good few of the subordinate officials in his pay), he had contrived to defraud the Administration of many hundreds of pounds during his five years' career as a smuggler.

Next morning Brough told the Infant to assume control of the Arak section until he relieved Sturrock. So ended his period of probation, and he blossomed forth as a Section Officer of the Frontier Department. He had the pleasure of seeing his name thus recorded in the Gazette a week or so later.

Although his duties varied but little after his change in title, they assumed a very different complexion. Then he had been a mere probationer, on sale or return so to speak; now he was a member of the department. In the course of the next few days he was initiated into the mysteries of the control and methods of the frontier service, and began to see the why and the wherefore.

Three weeks later he departed for Nobogodi, carrying with him the blessing of Mr Brough. His journey took him the better part of a week, travelling on foot, and camping out in a tent whenever he halted. As he drew farther away from the coast, so the country began to open out and become interesting. After three days he found himself toiling up and down heavily wooded hills, the forests on either side of the track so dense that he could not penetrate five yards without the utmost difficulty. On the fourth day he camped at a rest-house perched on the summit of a hill, from which he was able to obtain his first distant view since his arrival in Africa.

From there onwards his road lay through a well-populated country, open and prosperous looking. All round the numerous villages were large patches of cultivated land, while the grass lands beyond were pastured by the village cattle. On all sides the ground was covered with coarse grass and stunted black trees, relieved here and there by small tangled copses. The Infant was told that these had escaped the annual burning of the grass which had blackened all the more scattered trees. Game abounded in this bush, and it was there that he brought down his first buck.

As he had been led to expect, he found the natives friendly, and keen to show him sport. Tongue-tied at first, he struggled to make himself understood with his smattering of their language, delighted to find that not only were his few faltering words understood, but that his fluency increased daily. As he was in a hurry, he could not undertake any serious shooting, but promised himself this treat on a subsequent, more leisurely visit of inspection.

IV.

He reached Nobogodi about eleven o'clock one morning, very hot, very dirty, unshorn, but pleased with himself. He had been on the move since midnight, travelling hard, so

that Sturrooh might be delayed as little as possible before he went home on leave. Wherefore he was not a little annoyed when his welcome consisted of a grumpy "Hullo, so you've come at last! I do think you might have hurried up a bit, and not let me miss the only decent boat on the run."

"I'm awfully sorry," answered the Infant, "but I've come up as quickly as I possibly could. I've only been six days after all." The journey he had just accomplished was officially known as a nine days' trek. His companion apologised. "I say! I'm really most awfully sorry to be so damned peevish. But I've been over twelve months in this cursed hole and I'm only just getting over a go of fever. Have a drink?" Honour was satisfied in the usual manner.

"Well, how did you leave the Badger?" inquired Sturrooh.

"The which?"

"The Badger. Mister Julius Brough, Esquire, otherwise known as the Badger. One of the damnedest, meanest stinkers that ever existed in this land of stinkers. Thank the Lord, I shall be out of his clutches in another fortnight!" Whence it may be gathered that Master Sturrooh was not one of the favoured few to whom the real Brough had been revealed. The Infant was aghast at such an outburst against his hero, and no doubt looked it.

"Oh Lord!" groaned Sturrooh. "I suppose I've stuck my foot into it again. I might have known that you were one of Brough's curly-headed boys. No doubt he's been stuffing you with 'the high traditions of the frontier service.' Yah!"

Not knowing where to look or what to answer, the Infant said nothing; whereupon after a long tirade against Brough, the frontier, the country, mosquitoes, fever, and many other subjects—for Mr Sturrooh was thoroughly enjoying the sound of his own voice—the outburst of spleen subsided, and the speaker became a comparatively pleasant and not uninteresting companion.

But it was obvious that the man was completely played out, whether by loneliness or the climate or both the Infant could not tell. He was thin and haggard, his cheek-bones protruded from his face, his eyes shone unnaturally in their hollow sockets. His hand shook as he lifted cigarette or glass to his lips. The Infant, looking at this wreck of a man, who would no doubt recover his balance again once he had regained the society of his fellow-men, wondered whether he too would be in the same state when his turn came to be relieved. Being new to the ways of the country, he naturally took Sturrooh's diagnosis of his case as correct, never thinking that there might be other more potent reasons which would have brought about the same result. He had not yet learnt what

absolute isolation from one's kind for months on end could mean, nor could he know anything of the temptations that assail lonely men in a strange country. Nevertheless he was not sorry when the announcement that his bath was ready gave him an excuse to be by himself for a while.

He felt rather sickened by the other's lack of interest in the service, his attitude of complaint against the world in general. But quoting to himself the well-worn tag from Hamlet, he reminded himself that as yet he was unqualified to criticise the shortcomings of men with longer service than himself. Wherefore when next they met he heroically stifled his natural curiosity and entered into a lengthy discussion upon the delights of London when last seen by him. His companion brightened up considerably under such treatment, and outlined how he intended to spend his leave; a mysterious place called "The Spotted Dog" figured largely therein. The Infant's strategy was rewarded by the promise of a walk round after tea; until then a siesta was the order of the day.

"There's not much to hand over to you," said Sturrock at tea-time; "I think I can reasonably get away to-morrow. . . . Do you ride?"

"A little," admitted the Infant.

"Well, I've got two quite decent ponies which I'll sell you, if you like. I shall want to take one with me for the next few days, but I'll send him back."

"I'm afraid you'll have to take a post-dated cheque."

"Oh, that's all right! Quite usual, in fact. No one has any money for the first half of their time, or they'd never be such fools as to come out here," agreed Sturrock. "If you've got a saddle we'll ride this evening. I've only got one." The Infant had a saddle. "That's all right. John!" Sturrock called his boy.

"Sah!"

"Tell this Master's boy to give his saddle to Musa, and tell him to bring the dokis round in half an hour."

"We'll just have a look round this evening," continued he, "and to-morrow I'll hand over the office. I've written out the usual notes for you."

"So be it."

Nobogodi proved of enthralling interest to the Infant when they rode round that evening. The tiny white-washed office and court-house, the neat lines where the frontier police were quartered, and above all, the large native town lying in the valley below them, afforded a striking contrast to his life of a few months ago. He compared this open-air life with his former existence in shabby-genteel boarding-houses, varied by a round of theatres (as seen from the gallery), and an occasional gala night when he had donned his little-worn evening dress to be entertained by friends in more fashionable haunts.

The squalid monotony of the country was mercifully

hidden from him at present. He only saw a primitive people, learning the first principles of civilisation at the hands of the finest governing race in the world. He saw himself responsible in a minor degree for their welfare, and felt what a power for good, fair-minded, clean-living Englishmen could be, dispensing justice and the pax Britannica. Whatever the trials and troubles of that solitary life, whatever the worries and discomforts attaching thereto, it was a man's life, the life of an officer and a gentleman.

Then there was the other side of the picture—Sturrock. A man worn out with the burden of Empire. A man who had given ungrudgingly of his best and was ground down by it. (The Infant was looking through rose-coloured spectacles.) A man who had paid the price and was about to enjoy a well-earned leave. All honour to him. All compassion for his present condition, for which he must make the fullest allowances. The man had done the work, and would do it again.

Sturrock's petulant voice jarred upon his ears, breaking into his reverie. "You're damned silent! What the hell's the matter with you? You're a nice sort of bloke to cheer one up when one hasn't seen a white man for months!"

"Sorry—I was thinking," apologised the Infant.

"Musing on your great responsibilities, I suppose!" sneered Sturrock. "You'll soon get out of that, my lad! When you've been out as long as I have, you'll forget all that high-falutin drivel, and wish you had never been such a blighted idiot as to come out here."

The Infant blushed in silence; the shot had struck home. Later, when he found himself alone, he studied the staff register, and was surprised to find that the omniscient Mr Sturrock's service totalled one year and four months.

So their ride continued, the Infant's few pertinent questions about the Section meeting with such grudging response that he was fain to keep silent. He was not sorry when the ride was over.

On the following day he took over, and breathed a sigh of relief when Sturrock cantered off in the evening. At last he felt that he was a Man with a Job, and he determined to justify the trust that had been placed in him.

V.

So three months passed smoothly at Nobogodi. The Infant very soon settled down to the administration of his little kingdom. His staff seemed intelligent, the natives friendly, the work not too onerous, yet sufficient. Not a word had been whispered of Mahmoud all this time. He had found that the office was in a somewhat chaotic state,

which necessitated a good deal of straightening up. Whenever opportunities arose he went away travelling up and down the Section, visiting all the sub-collectors and patrols. It was on such a journey that he first made the acquaintance of Captain M'Ewen, a political officer whose district embraced the greater part of his Section. From him he heard many things about his predecessor which confirmed rumours that had drifted his way, but to which he had hitherto stoutly refused to give credence.

He was sitting in his office one morning, reading through the typewritten sheets of his monthly report, when a semi-naked runner was espied coming along with the mail-bags. This is always a great event in the bush. Among his official letters he was horrified to find this from Brough: ". . . I am surprised that you have thought fit to avoid all mention of the caravan that crossed your frontier during the last month; please explain at once why no duties were collected from it. That so large a caravan could have passed through your Section without your knowledge seems incredible, and reflects the utmost discredit upon the discipline you maintain among your hitherto efficient police detachment."

Cramming this unwelcome document into his pocket, he called for his pony, and cantered down to the native town where M'Ewen happened to be holding court.

"I'll be with you in five minutes, Infant," he shouted, then plunged anew into the nearly hopeless task of extracting the truth from a dense tissue of lies.

"Hullo, what the devil's up?" he exclaimed when he came outside. "You look as though you had got the sack! Cheer up!"

The Infant handed him the paper, which he read in silence. Then he swore. "Know anything about it?"

"Devil a bit."

"It's that swine Mahmoud out again, I bet. You don't know where they got across, I suppose, or when?"

"Absolutely no idea," answered the Infant. "Every sub-collector has reported no caravans of any importance for the last three months, and the patrols haven't heard of anything either. At least, they have not reported anything to me."

"Hum. There is dirty work somewhere! What's your N.O. like?" Captain M'Ewen was referring to the native officer in charge of the frontier police.

"Brough always speaks highly of him, and I've no cause for complaint."

"The Badger is generally right too," agreed the D.C. "What about your collector?"

"Lee. He's a Monrovian, and I don't like him; but I can't suspect him of any hanky-panky. Not that he isn't capable of anything."

"Where have you been lately, then?"

"Oh, up north, near Silla and Dabu. I don't think anything would have passed there

without my hearing of it from some one."

"Hardly likely; still, Africa's a big country, you know."

Before going any further it will be necessary to give a brief description of the country round Nobogodi. The actual frontier was rather over a hundred miles in length, and the area of the Section was something over three thousand square miles. The frontier lay mostly along the valley of the Ambo river, which flowed through a wide belt of thick forest-jungle and swamp. East of this lay two ranges of hills, the Nobogodi and the Momba Hills. The former were well populated and open, but the latter were very steep and rocky, with only their lower slopes inhabited. Through the middle of the Section, running east and west, lay the Trunk Road, more usually known as The Road. This joined up the nearest frontier post of the Other Power with Nobogodi, and—which was far more important—with Kwoida, an enormous native city. Thither, and to Jubwa, forty miles to the south of it, went all the trans-frontier trade. The normal route for all legitimate trade was along the Trunk Road; but there were evidently other routes.

M'Ewen and the Infant rode slowly towards the station, racking their brains as to how this caravan could have crossed. To get through to the north of The Road they would have had to scale the very difficult Momba Hills; and to pass so near to the sub-collectors' posts of Silla and Dabu without the Infant having been informed would have been no mean feat. Nevertheless, it would have been just the kind of thing that Mahmoud would delight in,—they had no doubt as to the ownership of the caravan. To cross south of The Road would mean negotiating the Ambo river, now swollen to some magnitude owing to the rainy season, which was just at an end. This accomplished, it would be comparatively easy to traverse the Nobogodi Hills and strike another main road. Once the hills had been passed the caravan would split up; and to find them among the network of villages on the broad plain below would be harder than finding the proverbial needle. Even then the whole frontier was constantly being patrolled, and no report had been made of any unusual activity from that or any other neighbourhood. No; it was more and more obvious that there had been collusion between Mahmoud and the frontier staff somewhere.

As they rode into the station they noticed a distinct air of subdued excitement. The police barracks seemed unsettled; the men, just dismissed from drill, were busily furbishing up their accoutrements and tidying up their lines far more carefully than usual. The sentry saluted as they rode up to the guard-room.

"Orge meni? Kona kwa debi?" the Infant demanded of the sergeant.

"Unayi Oku mari feneni okpo debi go."

"How the deuce do they know? I've heard nothing," grunted M'Ewen.

"Kari etu isi mali?" he asked.

"Unoro na afia,"[1] was the reply.

"When will he arrive?" inquired the Infant.

"This evening, we think; but we do not know," replied the sergeant. The white men rode away. "Isn't the way these people know things perfectly marvellous," said the astonished Infant. "We buck about our wireless telegraphy, but these people beat us every time."

"Yes," agreed M'Ewen. "That's one of the things we shall never learn. These people have had their 'bush telegraph' for centuries, while we are only at the beginning of things."

Nevertheless, the report was true. That evening Brough arrived, not in the least surprised to find himself expected, and everything prepared for his comfort. His demeanour was friendly and grateful; never by word or look did he hint at the least displeasure with the Infant's régime. Rather he complimented him on the smartness of his station and the efficiency of his men.

Following a pleasant bush custom, the three men forgathered round the flagstaff at sundown. Each had been preceded by his servants, who had set up their master's chair, placing glasses, tobacco, and his particular fancy in drinks — usually whisky and sparklet — at a convenient distance. For some time they smoked in silence, watching the fireflies, then the Infant spoke.

"Your memo was a beastly jar, Brough," he said. "I hadn't heard a word about any caravan; neither had M'Ewen, and he hears most things."

"I didn't really suppose you had," was the astonishing reply. "Yet that scoundrel Mahmoud himself passed within a mile of you when you were at Silla!"

"You don't mean it!"—"How the deuce . . .!"—exclaimed both his listeners together.

"It was his infernal cheek that riled me," admitted Brough. "He just walked calmly down the road with three hundred loaded donkeys, and slipped across the Momba Hills as though they belonged to him. To-morrow I'm going to visit Mr Sub-Collector Da Costa with a corporal's guard and a pair of handcuffs!"

"How the deuce do you know these things, Brough?" gasped the Infant.

"Infant, dear," laughed Brough, "there are some things that even you know nothing about! . . . Da Costa? Oh, I've known he was crooked for a long time, but I've never had any proof before."

Once more they relapsed into silence, two of them stricken dumb at the colossal impudence

---

[1] "What is the matter? Why all this excitement?" "The Big Master who knows everything [Brough] will soon be here."
"How do you know?" "We heard it said in the market."

of Mahmoud. Knowing that an attempt to cross the frontier would be least suspected if made as near as possible to the Section Officer's camp, he had arranged with Sub-Collector Da Costa, who was in his pay, to keep him advised of the Infant's movements. He had then slipped across the frontier (Da Costa looking the other way), and making use of a private path of his across the Momba Hills, had run an impudently large caravan as soon as the Infant's back was turned. On his own side of the frontier there was never any difficulty. The underpaid excisemen of the Other Power had established a most excellent working arrangement with him, whereby, provided their Latin palms were maintained in a sufficiently greasy condition, they were both blind and deaf whenever required. Mahmoud knew that he could not try this on with the English frontier officers, but their staff, who were often in debt, were more venal. Also his methods of dealing with people whom he disliked had been known to be unpleasantly violent.

Three days later Captain M'Ewen had the pleasure of sentencing Mr Nicolas Da Costa, ex-sub-collector, to two years I.H.L.

VI.

Brough's visit to Nobogodi was short but purposeful. Following upon the conviction of Da Costa, he instituted a thorough "general post" throughout the frontier, which reduced the effect of Mahmoud's bribery to the barest minimum. The frontier, never at any time slack, was galvanised into new life by the example of Da Costa and the others who were found to have been implicated.

Consequently, though many minor sinners were caught and punished, no serious smuggling took place. Mahmoud, who was well advised of these happenings, had sufficient sense to bide his time. True, he made one attempt in the next Section; but that was foiled, and the scattered caravan ignominiously chased back over the border.

Yet no one was satisfied. Brough and the Infant tried to console themselves with the reflection that their principal duties consisted in collecting revenue; but both these ardent souls thirsted for Mahmoud's blood. M'Ewen, more eager still, instituted a secret service throughout his district—and incidentally over the border as well. This was naturally of great assistance to the frontier officers, who welcomed his hearty co-operation.

Then a deserter from Mahmoud's camp presented himself before the Infant, his back displaying gory traces of his master's displeasure. Him he questioned at great length, to be regaled with marvellous tales of the smuggler's methods. He was told of beacons in the hills whereby his movements

were reported across the border; of caves among the rocks in the Momba Hills. Of Mahmoud's "fences" and agents in the plains below the hills. The Silla route had been an "open-sesame" for many months, through which quantities of merchandise had passed free of duty. He was told that an attempt to cross the Ambo river was being planned. Unfortunately this man had never seen the caves nor the agents, so his tale lost much of its value.

The Infant sat down and wrote out a report to Brough, which he sent by a messenger on a bicycle, and the deserter departed on foot with two armed constables to guard him. The cyclist arrived in safety, but three days later the naked bodies of the prisoner and his escort were found floating down the river. Mahmoud had not only revenged himself on his erstwhile accomplice, but had possessed himself of two complete police uniforms. Furthermore, the "contraband" was duly captured, and brought in triumph to Nobogodi. It consisted of two blind men leading two spavined donkeys, each loaded with baskets of gin bottles full of water. In one basket was a message: "With Mahmoud's compliments."

A few days later the Infant received this from Brough: ". . . I am afraid Mahmoud has gone one better than us this time, and that for the present, at any rate, we must give up actively seeking after his blood. This will, I know, be a bitter pill to you. Sooner or later the brute may become careless, and then we shall have a chance. Now it is no good, as he is on his guard." However, Brough did not disclose the fact that his secret inquiries after Mahmoud had, if anything, increased. M'Ewen might have told a very different tale; but both these men knew when to wait, and kept their information from the Infant for fear lest his impulsiveness should spoil everything. It must not be thought that they wished to exclude him when the time came for action—very much to the contrary. Both men were determined that the Infant should be in at the death, when it came. That it was the Infant who saw the finish, and not the others, was sheer luck.

So things jogged along quietly into the new year. One afternoon the Infant was sitting in his tent waiting impatiently for his tea. He had spent a long and tiring day relieving patrols on the forest road, and he was feeling thoroughly peevish. His tea was late, wherefore he shouted angrily in the direction of the kitchen. Outside the tent he heard his orderly greeting a fellow-constable, who came up to him and saluted. He presented a "book." The man's face seemed unfamiliar, so the Infant asked him whence he came. The man hesitated for a moment, then answered, "From Sovo." As the Infant read the message he frowned. It was signed "John Coker, sub-collector," and dated that same day. He looked at it

again, and evidently showed that he was suspicious, for the messenger turned quickly round as if to run. At that moment his boy came in with the tea.

"Gidé mwoke bia, osiso!"[1] he shouted.

Crash went the tea-tray as orderly and boy dashed off in pursuit of the stranger, shouting to the policemen outside as they ran. In a moment he was brought back disarmed.

"Call Mr Ojo," the Infant commanded. "Boy, go and get some more tea."

"Mr Ojo," he asked in English, as the native officer came in, "do you know that man?" The prisoner was subjected to a minute scrutiny.

"No, sir, he is not one of the detachment."

"Arrest him, please, and take him away." He took up the message as the prisoner was marched out. "Just listen to this. 'I am informed that an attempt will be made to smuggle many goods through the forest close here. Your presence would be welcome at the moment. John Coker.' It is dated to-day, and Coker was relieved the day before yesterday. Now I come to think of it, it is not Coker's writing. What do you make of it, eh?"

"I think it is to get you away from somewhere else, sir."

"Mahmoud again? Well, he's made a bloomer this time!"

"I think so, sir. Perhaps," he smiled slightly, "perhaps I might ask the prisoner a few questions?"

"Very good. Gently, mind!"

The native officer saluted and went out, leaving the Infant to his tea, a second edition of which had been brought. His orderly was hovering uneasily about the tent door.

"Yes?" he asked.

"That man was wearing the number of Corporal Eddo, who was murdered, sir."

"The devil!" said the Infant to himself. "So that's where the uniform came from."

He finished his tea and lighted his pipe. The stamp of a bare foot outside, announcing a saluting policeman, made him look up. He saw a Mahomedan trader waiting outside with a corporal.

"This man has a 'book' for you, sir."

"Another book? Bring him in."

The Mahomedan removed his sandals and prostrated himself according to custom, murmuring a deep-mouthed "Zaki!" (Lion). The Infant opened the note and saw in Brough's familiar handwriting: "This is one of my men. He can show you the caves. J. B."

"All right!" he said, and the policeman took himself off.

"You speak English?" he asked, wishing he could speak Hausa.

"Only small-small," the man replied in the Coast pidgin.

"Wait for out then," he ordered, and with another Zaki! the stranger went out-

[1] "Catch that man, quick!"

side and sat down in front of the tent.

"Something unusually hectic is about to transpire," misquoted the Infant to himself, not without satisfaction. Then he set himself to wait, hoping the native officer would not be long. A few minutes later Mr Ojo came back with a very frightened prisoner in his wake. The Infant noticed with amusement that the indignant policemen had lost no time in stripping his ill-gotten uniform from him.

"Sit down, Mr Ojo." Native officers may sit in the presence of their superiors. "Any luck?"

"He spoke, sir," was the quiet reply; and this is the gist of what he said.

He and another had been sent by Mahmoud, each wearing the uniforms that had been stolen from the murdered policemen. He had come to the white man, while his companion had gone to warn the patrol on the border, five miles to the south of Silla, that an attempt would be made halfway between them and Sovo. Mahmoud was waiting, and would cross along his old road through the Momba Hills. . . . When? To-morrow night.

"Can we trust him, Mr Ojo?"

"He did not lie to me, sir." Mr Ojo smiled reminiscently.

"Orderly! Bring in that Hausa man!" Brough's messenger was brought in. "Now see that no one comes near this tent," ordered the Infant.

The stranger and Ojo greeted one another as old friends.

"You know him?" asked the Infant.

"Yes, sir. He comes from the Senior Frontier Officer."

Interpreted by Ojo, they entered into a rapid conversation. He knew Mahmoud's caves? Yes, he had found them. Did he know Mahmoud's road there? No, there were so many from the border. Could they reach the caves unknown? Yes, if they went at night.

"How many men have we here, Mr Ojo?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"Is that enough?"

"Plenty, sir." Ojo, among others, had some old scores to pay off against Mahmoud.

So the three took counsel. The Infant was fortunately camping in the bush, far enough away from any village for his movements to pass unnoticed. That night he would slip away with Ojo, the Hausa, and a dozen police, and would make for the caves. They would leave the camp standing as a blind. Mahmoud's arrangements for the guarding of the frontier should be left alone, so that he would think that his trap had succeeded. However, a strong patrol would be waiting to intercept him on the Trunk Road in case he changed his mind; and as many police as could be spared were told to slink out of Nobogodi during the night, and make their way in twos and threes up the Momba Hills. He would have some one to guide them once they had reached an enormous crag near the summit that was called the Devil's Rock.

At ten o'clock they started off.

VII.

Fortunately it was not a very dark night, which was to their advantage; for there was just sufficient light for them to pick their way without being betrayed by the brilliant moon that would be shining shortly before dawn. By that time they hoped to be concealed. The first half of their journey was fairly easy going. The thin belt of cultivation of the first mile gave place to orchard bush. Here, though the grass was very long and stiff, it did not impede them. The Infant had taken a compass-bearing on to the Devil's Rock before daylight had faded, so that he was able to keep a rough check on their direction.

They pushed on for a couple of hours, until the hill began to slope more abruptly. A little farther, and they commenced clambering over large boulders with which the ground was plentifully spread. Ali, the Hausa, led them until they reached a tiny rock-strewn stream. There they halted for a well-earned breather. Then came the pull. Deliberately avoiding anything that bore the slightest resemblance to a track, they struggled steadily upward. They seemed to the Infant to be making sufficient noise to announce their coming over three English counties; but Ojo—an old campaigner—beyond occasionally cursing the careless, did not seem unduly alarmed.

At two they stopped again, the Devil's Rock towering above them not more than a mile and a half away. Ojo tiptoed towards him and whispered, "We are near the caves now, sir, but Ali does not know whether they are guarded or not."

"Suppose we ask the spy. Could they hear him at the caves if he tried to give the show away?"

Ali thought not, so the prisoner was brought. He was horribly frightened, all the time expecting to be killed; nevertheless, he preserved a sullen air, and refused to answer questions.

"You would only kill me," he said, "but Mahmoud would do things that would make death a blessing."

"All right," said the Infant. "If you do not tell, we will send you back to Mahmoud. He will think you showed us the caves."

"Master, I will tell you all!" the man grovelled. "Do not send me to Mahmoud."

"I shall if you do not speak the truth."

Yes, there were three men always at the caves. They were Senegalese from the French country. Two slept while the other watched. Where did they watch from? The spot was indicated. Followed an hour of frenzied waiting until Ojo reappeared to announce that the guards would watch no more. He and four policemen had seen to it.

Twenty minutes' scrambling over the rocks brought them to a plateau to the right of the Devil's Rock. There they saw a shapeless bundle covered with a cloth, a red stain soaking into the ground beneath it. The Infant shuddered as he turned towards Ojo.

"He fought, sir, so . . ."

"I see," gulped the Infant through clenched teeth. It was the first time that he had been in the presence of sudden death. "And the others?"

"They are prisoners, sir."

"Thank God!" Then he went on.

Mahmoud's warehouse was well chosen. Situated on a hill believed by the local natives to be haunted, among a desolation of coarse grass and rocks, it commanded the approaches on all sides. A narrow path led up to the plateau from the border, winding in and out among the boulders. Any one using the path would be completely hidden from the plain below. The hillside was honeycombed with enormous caves, in which his goods were dumped until such time as it was convenient for his agent to distribute them among the markets on the plain. By the light of the dead sentry's lantern they could see quantities of spirits, gunpowder kegs, cloth, and numerous other things, on all sides. Evidently Mahmoud did not do things by halves: the man must have been a regular African Carter Patterson.

Two sullen-looking natives —the former guardians of the eyrie — lay handcuffed in a corner, guarded by a cheerful young policeman.

The moon was now at its highest, and daylight would soon be upon them. Look-outs were posted in the most convenient places, while the remainder sought the most comfortable retreat wherein to wait through the long sun-lashing day. The Infant's orderly soon made him a soft couch among the bales of cloth. Water was fetched from the stream, and so the party settled down to wait for evening.

The long day dragged to its weary close. The caves proved delightfully cool and fresh compared to the sultry atmosphere outside, and in them the constables slept. Sleep was out of the question for the Infant; he was far too excited. Instead, he wandered about examining the booty and longing for a smoke. This he was afraid to do on account of the quantity of gunpowder stored there; but when he saw a policeman sitting on one keg and knocking his pipe out against another, quite unconscious of their contents, he thought it time to interfere. The powder was accordingly carried into the farthest cave from them, after which they smoked in peace.

Soon after sundown they began to prepare for the coming night. By seven o'clock they were all in their places, ranged in a semicircle round the plateau. Once the smugglers had reached their stronghold they would find themselves

faced by the frontier police on three sides and an unscaleable rock on the fourth. However, the police might not take the initiative in any act of violence: the law had to be respected, even when dealing with desperate law-breakers. Although they were faced by a strong body of armed desperadoes, they might not make use of their weapons until fired upon. After that things were different, though they had been taught—not without difficulty—that a live prisoner was preferred to a dead smuggler!

Presently Ojo crawled up and whispered that the policemen from headquarters were creeping up the hill and would soon join them. Ten minutes later a sergeant wriggled up to report that he had brought twelve men. The Infant was not sorry that this man was with him, for he was a tried veteran—an old soldier who wore the D.C.M. among his other medals.

Nine o'clock went by. Ten, then eleven. The Infant was beginning to feel horribly cold and cramped, and to wish he had never come at all. He was very hungry and abominably sleepy. Had Mahmoud got wind of the trap? Would he not come after all? He felt an agitated clutch on his leg, and glanced round. His orderly was pointing. Yes. He could hear it plainly: the shuffle of feet and the creak of harness. They were coming after all! He had forgotten all about being cold and hungry now!

It was like a Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane—the flat stage, bathed in the cold clear moonlight, awaiting the arrival of Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves. Would they never come . . . ? Then the stage began to fill. Two men with rifles "walked on," evidently looking for something. (Of course, they missed the guard!) They paused talking, then looked anxiously into the cave. (Would they give the alarm? No, they seemed satisfied, for they turned away from the caves, and leant against a boulder.)

Then came the caravan. The Infant counted over a hundred pannier-laden donkeys, each pair in charge of a man. In front and behind of them were some thirty armed guards, mostly with rifles. Last to appear on the stage was a finely-dressed Mahomedan riding a white donkey. He rode forward, and sat at his ease before giving the signal to unload the baskets. Every curve of his body radiated strength and daring: he was insolence personified. Ojo, lying alongside the Infant, gave a gasp of surprise and raised his revolver, but he was checked with a gesture and signalled to lie still. Then Mahmoud waved his hand, and the unloading of the baskets commenced, each man knowing from long practice exactly what to do and when to do it. It was a fascinating display of ordered confusion.

"Hold, in the name of the King!"

The Infant had leapt to his feet, challenging them in the name of the law. The effect was instantaneous. Mahmoud, jerking his reins so that his

donkey reared and nearly unseated him, spun round to face the intruder. Shots rang out from his band. The Infant sat down with a bump, pulled into safety by the faithful Ojo as the fight commenced. Mahmoud, making a desperate effort to gallop for safety, fell in a heap as Ojo shot the donkey under him. In an instant there was a struggling mass, as a couple of constables rushed forward to grapple with him.

Of what happened next the Infant has not the faintest idea. He remembers seeing red, and, charging forward into the thick of things, laying about him with his stick. The frontier police, their bayonets fixed, swarmed over the boulders, and charged into the general pandemonium. Shots were fired all round among the struggling men and donkeys, but whether by friend or foe he cannot say. At last a panic-stricken jumble of men and beasts broke through the ring of policemen and disappeared down the hill. The men who were left fought for their lives, but were sooner or later disposed of.

Then came the reckoning. Mahmoud was a prisoner in their hands, and seven of his band were dead. Three others had been disarmed, and were now safely handcuffed. Two policemen had been killed—a young constable and the old sergeant. Three more were hurt. Nothing now remained but to guard their prisoners and wait for daybreak.

Ojo walked up to the handcuffed Mahmoud before he was taken into the cave and laughed at him.

"Dog! Most assuredly will you swing at the end of a rope!"

Mahmoud looked him up and down from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head and back again, but not a word did he speak.

Then he spat on the ground.

VIII.

Strictly speaking, the Infant should have been instantly promoted; but, alas! that sort of thing does not often happen in real life. That his exploit did not pass altogether without recognition will be seen from the following extract from a letter written to him by Mr Renouf Buffett, and carefully preserved among his treasures.

Mr Buffett wrote: ". . . I am directed by His Excellency the Governor, who has read your most interesting report on the capture of the notorious smuggler Mahmoud, to express to you his most cordial congratulations on the successful issue of your venture. His Excellency feels that the satisfactory manner in which the smugglers were brought to book reflects the highest credit upon the efficiency and devotion displayed, both by yourself and by the Frontier Service as a whole."

In the margin was written, "Well done.—R. B."

# VIGNETTES.

BY ELLA MACMAHON.

## I. MISS ORIEL.

MISS ORIEL lives alone in the house where she has spent her life. Long ago her father was the clergyman of the parish—one of those known as perpetual curacies—but when he died it was joined to a neighbouring parish, the little ugly church was closed, and the glebe-house, which he had purchased before his death, became the property of his daughters. They were young then, and there were two of them; there is one now, and she is old. The house is built of grey Irish stone, and is perfectly square, with the hall door in the middle, a window on either side, and three windows above, exactly like what a child will draw upon a slate. It stands close to the road in a field out of which a short drive has been carved leading up to a small gravelled sweep in front of the hall door, with the garden beyond and the yard and stable behind. On the so-called lawn, which has yielded a crop of hay, Miss Oriel's cow grazes. A short flight of rather grass-grown granite steps leads up to the door. After you have rung the rusty bell the door is opened slowly, and from a niggardly aperture Miss Oriel herself peers forth to see who you may be. What you see is a small form clad in heavy woolly black garments unrelieved by a vestige of white or colour. A big mushroom hat, fashioned out of heavy swathes of black silk, surmounts a small face. The latter is thin, delicate, and shrunken, with an ivory skin, dark eyes, and the remains of beauty. Her eyes speak to you before her tongue. They are expressive, pathetic, and appealing; withal they gleam with humour, and very little escapes them. They will raise themselves to yours with a shy coquetry that astonishingly discounts the disabilities of age and thrills you with their charm. If I were a great, a very great artist, I would paint Miss Oriel in her habit of to-day, and the world would have a portrait worthy to stand beside that ever-wondrous Duchess of Milan, which Holbein has left as a legacy to mankind.

When she has satisfied herself as to your identity, Miss Oriel opens the door more generously and invites you to enter. The hall is fairly large, the staircase facing the entrance. As the visitor follows the hostess into a room on the right-hand side, a cat darts out of it. It would be hard to say whether this room is meant to be a drawing-room or a dining-room; it is lighted—badly—by

a window kept, even in the height of a hot summer, hermetically sealed. At some period in the early Victorian era its walls were covered with paper, but a lifetime of smoky fires and the undisturbed dust of years has obliterated every vestige of colour and pattern, while the ceiling (of which the cornice is precarious in places) is, from the same cause, quite black. Carpet, curtains, chairs, and tables loom rather than appear through the haze of immemorial dust and smoke. The once white window-blind is grimily black, and is raised or lowered by the artless method of rolling it up from the bottom and fastening it with a pin. The pin is black also—from rust. Upon the walls are hung pictures of some description, but it is difficult to discover their subjects, so begrimed have they become. On the other hand, several photographs of quite glaring freshness shed an incongruous modernity about them, which, however, contends vainly against the overwhelming forces of dust and decay around.

Miss Oriel waves you to a seat, and then seats herself upon a high drawing-room chair, one of a suite with slender curly legs and contorted-looking arms, belonging to the period which began with the Great Exhibition of 1851 and ended in the early eighties. Seated thus, she is a curiously uncomfortable-looking little figure. But apparently she prefers this sort of chair; anyhow, callers never see her in any other. The room is not rich in easy-chairs, but I fancy I catch a glimpse of a big old arm-chair behind the screen which is drawn across the fireplace to conceal the fire, which I feel sure is smouldering in the grate, even on this sultry day. Another cat darts out suddenly from this fastness, nearly braining itself against the half-open door of the room in its frenzied haste to escape. No doubt it has been sleeping the sleep of all good cats in the big old chair aforesaid. Miss Oriel's eye follows it with an expression partly amused and partly speculative; she makes no allusion to it, however, but plunges into local gossip, of which she has a mastery all her own. We are just entering into the choicest portions when a raucous voice from the region of the hall addresses her with somewhat mysterious insistence.

"That's Matty, be bothered to him," is her comment, and she forthwith proceeds to interview "Matty" in the hall.

From behind the partially-closed door one perforce overhears an acrid and vehement argument as to whether the kettle is *really* boiling. In case the situation should appear a little odd, let it be stated that Matty is Miss Oriel's factotum, representing and performing the somewhat varied duties of herd, gardener, and general domestic servant.

The wrangle ends as suddenly as it had begun by an ejaculation from Matty to the effect that he can hear the kettle "boiling over like a

mad injun!" and Miss Oriel reappears in her drawing-room no whit discomposed by the interlude. The tea which presently appears is so excellent that Matty's vindication as a kettle-boiler is instant and complete. Miss Oriel dispenses it with fine grace and composure, broken only once by the importunity of one of the cats which has meandered back into the room, true to the call of the milk-jug. She disengages the grip of the creature's claws from her skirt with the remark that—

"There is a perfect persecution of cats in this house," and then, with bland contradiction of fierce objurgations delivered at the animal, proceeds to empty the milk-jug of a lavish portion of its contents into a saucer for the aforesaid puss, adding that "not one of them would touch the milk if it had a drop of water in it!"

To us who have come from a land in which milk is a costly and limited luxury this remark is a little dazing, and in somewhat stunned amazement one watches the cat clear the saucer with competent speed and mew for more.

"And that Matty," Miss Oriel exclaims with sudden irrelevance: "if you lived to be a hundred you'd never fathom Matty! He told me the cow had run dry, and I had to send for Mr Leary" (the local vet.) "Well, my dear"—a thin laugh out through the words—"and what do you think was the meaning of the cow being dry? She was no more dry than myself"—accepted metaphorically, this remarkable statement is understandable—"but, if you please, my fine gentleman don't like milking, and that was why my cow was dry. Oh!" Miss Oriel turns up her eyes with dramatic emphasis, "Matty was very impidint to Mr Leary when he found out about the cow—very impidint; but, indeed, I think Mr Leary gave him as good as he got. But he came in telling me to get rid of Matty and the cow would give me milk. But *I* said, 'Ah, Mr Leary, the divil ye know is better than the divil ye don't know'"—pause—then, with a sly smile, "and now do ye know what Mr Leary said to *me* when I said that to him?"

I profess myself unable to conjecture.

"He said, 'Miss Oriel, I give you my word, *any* divil you don't know would be better than Matty.'"

There is another pause, during which I silently subscribe to Mr Leary's dictum.

"Oh, he's very impidint," Miss Oriel resumes. "I'm thinking it's all the nonsense they're talking now over this Sinn Fein that is setting him up so high in himself."

"No doubt," I observe with a laugh, "he's seeing himself King of Ireland."

"No doubt," Miss Oriel repeats drily, "when they get their lovely Republic we'll have kings tripping us up at every corner."

"Ah, yes," I assent, with another laugh, "there will be no persecution by England then."

"Persecution," Miss Oriel smiles at me: "the only persecution any one in Ireland is suffering from at present is a persecution of prosperity. Was there ever anything like it? They have everything they want in the world, and they can't enjoy it because they're craving something they don't know what! That is what has made Matty so impidint."

I heartily assent to this, and murmur a vague hint as to the desirability of substituting a female servitor for the egregious Matty. Miss Oriel takes no notice of this, but immediately switches the conversation to another and apparently irrelevant direction, in her characteristic fashion. She begins talking of some opulent relations of hers who possess and inhabit a fine country place "replete," as house-agents say, with every comfort.

"He wanted me to go and live there," she concludes complacently; "indeed, he's always wanting me to go and live with them."

"And why not?" I ejaculate, and I hope she has not seen my eyes taking stock of this room, as a mental vision of the rooms in that other house of which she is speaking rises before me.

"Live there! My dear," her voice sharpens and rises slightly, "there's sixteen servants in that house; why"—her eyes are deprecating—"you'd be *stifled* in it!"

I leave her a little later where I had met her on my arrival—at the open hall door. I look back at her, framed against the dingy paint, and I wish once more that the brush of Holbein were mine. As I walk the few yards to the gate I see Matty resting himself on a bank under a tree. His attitude betokens repose and meditation. Possibly he is sunk in a trance of contemplation of his own kingly uplifting shortly to come! At all events he is doing nothing very pleasantly. Miss Oriel's words keep re-echoing in my ears . . . "sixteen servants in that house . . . you'd be stifled in it."

## II. MARY ANN.

Mary Ann is the most prominent person in the village. She is the personification there of Harrod's and the Stores and the Food Controller. She owns a shop which, though modestly located in a thatched cabin, has all the same "money's worth" in it. It is well stocked, scrupulously clean, and very neat, like Mary Ann herself. She is still young, though approaching the period and condition described in Ireland as a "settled girl." She has not yet quite reached it. Mary Ann is strongly and compactly built, of medium height, and well-nourished appearance. Her hair is light-brown, her eyes are light-blue, and her complexion is highly coloured. She looks at you very straightly with clear and

candid gaze. Yet there are those who say that Mary Ann can turn a crooked penny with the best. Be that as it may, she is a valuable asset in our present condition, for she unravels for us the mysteries of our sugar ration, that one and only article of food which an alien and brutal Government insists upon rationing in persecuted and defenceless Ireland. Mary Ann's capable hand doles out the sugar, and—whisper it not in Whitehall—is able now and then to "do" her favourite customers an extra quantity. It is useless to ask her how she manages this, for she is as close as wax, and her sole response to all such questions is silence and a hardening and brightening of her eyes. A certain hard, bright capability is indeed the dominant note of her personality. Probably this is why she is not popular. Capability is an admirable quality, but it is not always an engaging one. Moreover, if Mary Ann is less than popular she is completely prosperous, and prosperity is not a passport to favour in Ireland.

At least it used not to be in old Ireland, but to-day there is a new Ireland, to which Mary Ann and her sort belong. She is indeed one of its bright particular products. By that it need not be supposed that Mary Ann is a Sinn Feiner—on the contrary, Mary Ann is invariably on the safe side: but she walks the new paths with a firm tread, and her eyes look straight in front of her. There are no dreams in Mary Ann's eyes—they are filled with the main chance.

No wonder her borders enlarge themselves day by day. Not so long ago she began with the little ten-foot-square shop and a bicycle. She still has both, but I can see her in the near future in larger rooms and the chief seat in her own motor-car.

The latest news is that she has bought "Drumgoole's"! These reverberating tidings flutter not merely the village but the entire neighbourhood. Bought Drumgoole's! And at a price that never was heard of since the world began!

Drumgoole's is a strong farm with quite a large and imposing dwelling-house upon it. Glory be to God! what could a lone woman want with all that? The question finds its own answer. For what but the one fixed object of every female breast!

The first time I see her after this portentous announcement, I inquire whether it is not to be followed by another more interesting still.

"So, Mary Ann, you have bought Drumgoole's," I say invitingly.

"Ay!" Mary Ann is no more improvident of speech than of anything else belonging to her.

"Well," I persist with what archness I am mistress of, "I think we all know what *that* means."

She is silent, but the blue eyes show that hardening and brightening which indicates that she has heard, and does not intend to make any ad-

missions; still, if a face whose every feature is opposed to what we call coyness could express that emotion, hers does so now.

"Anyhow," I continue in the same key, "I wish you good luck, Mary Ann, with the new house, and I'm sure 'himself' when he comes along to hang up his hat there will be a lucky man."

The merest reflection of a smile wavers in her eyes for a second, but her accents are as dry and cool as usual when she makes reply—

"There are more married than keep good houses."

And with that I have to be content.

Gossip couples various names with hers, but so far she has held the balance between the aspirants as competently as she holds the sugar scales. Still I think that before long she will throw the handkerchief, and where she throws it it will assuredly rest; for Mary Ann's aim is as capable as herself—she'll see to it that it gets there. He will be a fortunate young man, no doubt; nevertheless, if I were compelled to choose between the two for a wife, I think I would choose—Miss Oriel.

### III. MRS DELIA MURPHY.

Mrs Delia Murphy was slightly drunk—not badly, if one can admit any question of degree in that vice, but at all events not quite sober. She had had, in fact, a "sup o' porter" with Mary Fogarty. On leaving the hospitable house of refreshment where, contrary to the law as at present enacted, her friend had "treated" her, she was able to walk homewards alone with steady steps, the "sup" manifesting itself merely in a desire to talk, irrespective of place or suitability, to laugh for no apparent reason, and to make much play with a large, white, and not over-clean pocket-handkerchief. Her way lay along Wolfe Tone Street, renamed thus in lieu of George Street, after an eighteenth-century monarch of that name. For Dunsealy (pronounced by the majority of its inhabitants Dunsayly) is a town of shining disloyalty, and lives up (or down) to its reputation with notable perseverance. Like nearly every country town in Ireland, its houses and buildings are of soulless and depressing ugliness, with, in its case, the single exception of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which is—architecturally—a more or less effective copy of the chapel of King's College, Cambridge.

Wolfe Tone Street is a somewhat squalid thoroughfare, having at one end the large bleak edifice dedicated to the county jail. The high grimy wall of the latter, which runs flush with the street, bears upon it a legend boldly painted in rude white letters, and in the English language, "Vote for the Man in prison" — an

exordium entirely superfluous to any person who knows Ireland, and the strength of attachment which knits a large portion of the population of the Island of Saints to the inmates of jails. Other legends of seditious or, if you prefer, patriotic sentiment are similarly inscribed on other walls and hoardings—such as: "Tipperary leads the way!" "Up the Boys of Cork!" "Up Sinn Fein!"

Mrs Delia Murphy's eye lighting upon these, glowed with a feeling compounded of love, hate, and malt — love for Ireland, hate for England, malt for a general sense of wellbeing. Under these conditions her feelings usually found vent in the expression of an ardent and sincere hope that England might be defeated, nay, even utterly destroyed! The lauds of victory lately chanted in Whitehall have never reached Mrs Delia Murphy, and, even if they had, she would still have gone on hoping and praying that, if not the Germans, some one else—it mattered not who—would speedily compass the destruction of her Enemy! Apart from this obsession, Mrs Delia Murphy harboured no ill-will towards anybody.

There are in Wolfe Tone Street, besides many public-houses, several tobacconists' shops. Outside one of the smallest of these, boards were displayed bearing upon them newspaper posters. A bright green sheet belonging to a Dublin evening paper, whose politics are aptly expressed in the colour of its posters, retailed the following item of news:—

"Holland refuses to give up the Kaiser to England."

Mrs Delia Murphy, who was not unintelligent or at all averse to being *au courant* with topics of the day, halted in front of this and read it aloud twice.

"An' why would they?" she inquired blandly of some invisible auditor, "why would they? Oh, blessed hour! look at the way them English is persecutin' and tormintin' that poor good man. The Lord save us! but them English are the vil-lians of the worrld an' no mistake. Faith, I'd like the Kayzer meself as well as any wan, an' I don't care who hears me say it."

Her voice rose a semitone on the last sentence, possibly because a stalwart and pompous sergeant of Royal Irish Constabulary had drawn near. He, however, stood composedly indifferent to these utterances. He adjudged it no part of his duty to "take cognisance" as, in his best official phraseology, he would have expressed it, of Mrs Delia Murphy's opinion of the ex-Kaiser, or of any other European potentate, past or present. Moreover, he knew who she was, and that she was a "decent respectable woman," while long and wide experience enabled him to calculate to an infinitesimal drop the amount of the "sup" and the probable extent of its effects.

With a certain subtle affectation, not unworthy of a wider stage, Mrs Delia Murphy,

seemingly still in ignorance of the Sergeant's proximity, flourished the pocket-handkerchief and resumed her conversation on a more argumentative note.

"I would *so* rather have him (presumably the ex-Kaiser) than many a wan I could mention. The dear knows an' he's better than ould George——"

But at this the representative of the Law fixed upon the speaker a curiously steady gaze. Mrs Delia Murphy was clearly heading for forbidden ground. Still the Sergeant was a kindly as well as a shrewd man, and he held firmly that in dealing with certain classes of offenders everything was to be gained by leniency. Meeting the fixity of the policeman's gaze as if she had now become aware of his presence for the first time, Mrs Delia Murphy burst into a paroxysm of incontinent laughter.

"'Arrah, Sergeant, ye're the good man yerself, and yer better nor wan o' them Kayzers or un-Kayzers so ye are." Her eyes twinkled, and she made another almost coquettish flourish of the handkerchief in his direction.

The Sergeant unclasped his hands from behind his back and gave his thick stubbly moustache an upward twist.

"Here now," he said good-humouredly, "let ye go home, it's time for ye. The day's changing: there's rain on the sun." He stared at her as he said it with solemn pomp.

Mrs Delia Murphy looked up at the sun and winked at the Sergeant with unblushing familiarity.

"The Lord love ye!" she remarked cordially, "an' if ye live long enough maybe ye'll see the rain fall."

The irony was not unmerited, for the sun shone in a clear heaven of blue, and there was not a cloud in the sky.

The next moment her air of familiarity changed into one of delicate flattery. She stood, the pocket-handkerchief — for the moment out of action — floating down from her hand.

"Well, ye're the lovely fine man yerself, so ye are anny way," she remarked, "and I don't wonder yer wife had ye."

Once more the Sergeant fixed her with a comprehensive stare, nevertheless far down below the surface of his eyes a smile lurked. Perhaps she saw it, perhaps not; but she turned from the newspaper posters and resumed her way, though not without a parting flutter of the handkerchief, a laugh, and a languishing wink. The Sergeant's eyes followed her ruminatively as she went. Her bonnet had slipped just a shade off the front of her head, the flat bands of her hair had loosened ever so slightly. The expression of his face showed that he had noticed these blemishes: it also showed regret. He was not without a sense of the fitness of things: there is something particularly unfit and altogether displeasing in untidy grey hair. He gave her about fifty feet start and then followed, keeping her in view. Her progress was quite event-

less, but it was enlivened by conversational outbursts of irregular intensity. The "sup," as the Sergeant knew, would be responsible for that. "Guinness" is a potent beverage, and if, of late, its price has gone up, its strength nevertheless has not gone down.

"An' what *I* say is this," he overheard, "why don't the worrld go for them vil-lians and get the poor good man out of prison." Apparently Mrs Delia Murphy's mind was still dwelling upon international affairs, "An' little Willy!" She stood still and rocked herself in a frenzy of laughter. "Augh! *that's* the lad for me when Ireland's a nation once more. 'Tis me own boy he'll be, an' we'll show the like o' them English who we are!"

The Sergeant had slackened his pace when Mrs Delia Murphy halted. He did not wish to overtake her — at least, so long as she behaved within permissible bounds; nor did he wish her to discover that she was being followed. He was too prudent to provoke, though too humane to abandon her, even though he had no desire at all to intervene, and only hoped that such would not be necessary. He had a mother just about Mrs Delia Murphy's age. It made him kind to elderly women.

After this ebullition she resumed her way more quietly, the watchful Sergeant following sedately.

The street was somewhat empty, and she walked on without meeting any acquaintance. Nor did any one notice her. It would need yet another "sup" to have made Mrs Delia Murphy conspicuous in an Irish thoroughfare.

All went well—and the Sergeant was even beginning to think of retiring from the scene — till she was within a stone's-throw of the turn leading to the small side-street wherein she lived. At the corner of this there is a large and much-favoured gin-palace, known to its clients as Hegarty's "Big House." Dunsealy is a garrison town, and the "Big House" is beloved of the troops. The latter are traditionally loathsome to the rest of the population; and none say more abusive things of them than the proprietor of the "Big House," Hegarty himself, in his capacity as Chairman of the Dunsealy Town Council. Yet when a dastardly Government withdrew the cavalry from Dunsealy, Hegarty uplifted his voice in the market-place and called down the wrath of outraged Heaven upon another injustice to Ireland!

Mrs Delia Murphy, with her police escort, approached the front entrance to the "Big House." The hour of closing had not long since arrived; but open or shut, there always lingered about the door habitués who seemed unable to tear themselves away from its charmed portals. Among them on this occasion was a good-looking young corporal of infantry in khaki uniform. He bore upon his

cap the badge of that very famous regiment, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, on his breast the red, white, and blue ribbon of 1914, and on his arm two gold wound-stripes and no less than five chevrons, one being red. He was engaged in quite amicable converse with three or four civilians of the particular calibre which loafs in the vicinity of public-houses.

Mrs Delia Murphy halted in front of the group, and the police Sergeant quickened his steps. A muttered objurgation broke from his lips—it was evident that she was not going to pass by and go down to her own house without the exchange of words with these gentlemen. The Sergeant, having come within five paces of her, halted, prepared, in the language of the Navy, to "stand-to" till the action developed, while cursing the luck which threw a man in khaki across the path of Mrs Delia Murphy at that moment. He had not long to wait. A flutter of the pocket-handkerchief, so to speak, opened fire. It was aimed, as the Sergeant perceived, and would have expected, at the soldier. But the latter, engrossed in conversation, observed it not. At the moment, however, he raised his head and laughed, showing a row of white and even teeth, which did credit to nature, or the Army dentist. His laughter moved Mrs Delia Murphy to—so to speak—go over the top. With a wide-spread sweep of her arms she flung them round his neck in a strangling embrace, and pressed her lips upon his cheek in a resounding kiss. She raised the pocket-handkerchief in salute and her voice in strophe and anti-strophe.

"Up the Irish Fusiliers! Sure I knew his mother before he was born! An' it's the dacent boy he is, an' no mistake; an' if anny wan says against that, 'tis Delia Murphy 'll have the Law of them." Her voice rang slightly higher, and the handkerchief sailed out on the breeze.

"The Irish Fusiliers, success to them! Look at him now and the fine grand figure of him and the open countenance of him. May the Lord bless the Irish Fusiliers! Up the Irish Fusiliers! Up the Rebels!"

Not a muscle of the Sergeant's face moved, but he turned on his heel and went back to his beat.

# THE LITTLE ADVENTURE.

## BEING THE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN RELIEF FORCE.

BY GILBERT SINGLETON GATES, 46TH R.F., R.R.F.

### XIII.

THE complete demoralisation of the Bolshevik brought tranquillity and rest. Billets were plentiful in the captured area. The villagers viewed us with mingled surprise, pleasure, and curiosity. From a domestic point of view we were most welcome. Had we not large supplies of tea and sugar to exchange for their ridiculously scraggy chickens? Were we not the carriers of liberty and rum, and the protectors of the poor? Assuredly. So, with our advent, there commenced the exhumation from the earth of family treasures hidden from the avaricious eyes of the Bolshevik soldiery. Precious *ikons* wrapped in straw, well-worn furs, and ancient shot-guns were dug up and restored to their rightful places in the bare dwelling-rooms. The lurid Bolo posters proclaiming liberty and equality were torn down, though none dared to replace them with the cheap oleographs of the "Little Father." Enemy agents were watchful, and reprisals would result if ever the chief commissar of the district returned.

The wisdom of gaining favour with the victorious commanders led the peasantry to cast aspersions on the sympathies of some of their brethren. Judging from the allegations, it appeared that the whole community was planning a subtle revenge on the British. In reality each peasant was seeking his own personal security. Finally, we exercised stern authority. All *storastas* were assembled and warned that villagers were suspected of hiding Bolshevik deserters and agents. Strenuous denials and vigorous headshakings concluded the conference. But the following morning quite a few of the straggling "heroes of the N—— Brigade headquarters" found their way with comparative ease to the various commanding officers of villages. They were all too apprehensive to be of any value to the Intelligence officer, and were eventually sent to join their incarcerated companions. Nemesis struck down one wretched peasant in Gorodok. Months before we arrived two British airmen had been forced to descend in the forest behind the Bolo front line. They evaded capture for some days by hiding in the dense woods, till a man cutting faggots observed them, and disclosed their refuge to the enemy. Death followed their immediate capture. Another peasant of Gorodok had been ill friends with the betrayer

for some years. Revenge led him to turn informer, not to the British authorities, who would insist upon an official inquiry into the charge, but to the Russian cavalry, whose vengeance was swift and unreasoning. The next morning the betrayer of the airmen was found shot dead in the forest, with his widow weeping over the corpse. Inquiries amongst all troops produced no information. He had just been found shot dead. It must have been an act of God.

Secreting rifles and ammunition was another habit of the Russians. An order that all weapons should be delivered up was half-heartedly obeyed. As the warnings grew more frequent and the threats of punishment increased, so the pile of enemy arms grew higher. Yet in searching houses one often found rifles and boxes of ammunition, and no one seemed more surprised than the occupants of the houses at the discovery. But with the captured horses the peasants were even more crafty. They sauntered round the horse lines with an apparently indifferent air. They were studiously examining the animals we had rounded up. With humble mien, an aged Russian approached the transport officer and suggested that a most unfortunate mistake had been made. In corralling the captured animals the British soldiers, quite by accident, had taken this particular peasant's only horse. It had just been turned out to graze when the soldiers came along. Naturally they were not aware of the ownership of the horse, but under the circumstances—the state of the crops, the large family of the owner, and his great needs—might the animal be returned by the all-powerful and just British officer?

Though fairly well versed in Russian cunning, the transport officer, moved by the plausible story, accompanied as it was by manifestations of grief and an accurate description of one of the animals in the lines, accepted it as truth. And the peasant trudged away with the best horse in the stables. An hour later the T.O. realised his folly. Fifty Russian peasants regretted that his men had rounded up their animals. It was not for them to suggest that the soldiers knew of the ownership, but the crops . . . &c.!!! Only one solution was possible of this dilemma. It meant the recall of the first and more fortunate claimant. His copious tears on having to yield up his newly-acquired horse were a tremendous satisfaction to his fifty compatriots, who had failed so miserably in their efforts.

The actual employment of ponies owned by villagers to move guns was an event demanding an inexhaustible supply of patience. From Seltso to Lipovets is three miles, and with a team of eight ponies, four spares, eight drivers, and large numbers of British officers and men, it took six hours to move an 18-pounder from one village to the other. Various

portions of harness were borrowed for the occasion, deficiencies being made good with pieces of string. None of the ponies had worked in a team before. Each peasant insisted on accompanying his own pony and endeavouring to secure for it as little work as possible. In order to gain uniformity of effort each man was armed with a stick and urged to beat the pony in front of his own. This was done most assiduously, and some cohesion resulted. The roads were appallingly bad, and the gun stuck fast in a persistent manner. The normal method employed by the Russian pony to extricate a load in such a predicament is first to retreat as far as the harness will allow, and then to plunge forward.

Naturally all the pieces of string would snap upon such a proceeding. With each of the eight ponies performing this movement at different moments on a road two feet deep in mud, in impenetrable darkness, the resultant chaos was as complete as chaos could possibly be. At every short halt the Russian drivers would set up loud cries of "Sleepem" and "Scoffem," and when on its eventual arrival at Lipovets the Bolo greeted the gun and its escort with a few shells, the harness was flung down and the whole transport vanished in a few seconds.

This period of our sojourn in North Russia was marked by an increase in our gifts of food and materials to the villagers. It was common knowledge amongst them that we contemplated a speedy evacuation. Tearful entreaties to remain were apparently reserved for war correspondents at Archangel. The inhabitants of that town had not unnatural misgivings at the outcome of its recapture by the Bolshevik after we had departed. Moreover, with the British forces would depart the most admirable canteens, from which emanated precious whisky and gin, an ample compensation for the absent *vodka*. Relations between the British at the base and the inhabitants at the base had been most intimate. Many marriages had taken place, many engagements had been announced, and the prospects of departure gave rise to dismay among the Archangel *bourgeoisie*. Dances and social gatherings would end, and the delights of the jazz would be overshadowed by the presence of the Red terror.

In the Dvina villages, however, the inhabitants were absolutely apathetic. Their chief endeavour was to obtain as much food as possible, and bury it before the Bolshevik arrived in the area, and also to dispossess themselves of all their North Russian Government roubles in exchange for Kerensky and Bolshevik money. The coming and going of opposing forces was growing monotonous. First the Bolos, then the British, Americans; Bolos, then British again. And as the British proposed to leave—well, the Bolos would come again.

"*Nichevo.*" It was necessary to prepare for the arrival of the Soviet. These preparations began to take the form of individual espionage. While apparently friendly and helpful to us, many of the peasants were actually carrying information to the enemy, the results of which became evident when the evacuation began, for the Bolo attacked at the time originally fixed as zero hour. Fortunately the date had been put forward at the last moment, and his plans went agley. Rigid watch was kept on all villagers who sought for mushrooms and lost horses in No Man's Land. One old resident, discovered lurking in a clearing with a rifle in his hands, said he had just stumbled across it in the wood. A search revealed ammunition hidden away in his clothes, and he then volunteered the explanation that he was out shooting duck to sell to the British officers. Those agents who managed to squeeze through the cordon of troops had many weary *versts* to traverse before they came in contact with the enemy.

Apparently the Bolshevik forces had almost entirely disappeared, save for a few of the "stalwart heroes," who held a ragged line some miles from our advanced posts. The long wait for the evacuation to commence was most tiresome. Having performed the tasks allotted to us, every one in the force looked forward to a speedy withdrawal. But the congestion at the base, the lack of available transport, and the depth of water in the Dvina, contributed to long delay and continuous postponements. And strange events were to be our portion before we left for home. The quiet aspect of Seltso village was disturbed one September afternoon by the influx of many able-bodied civilians. The officers of the British garrison met in conference to decide who these newcomers were. Several contentions were put forward, the fear being voiced that they were Bolo agents, endeavouring to recruit sympathisers and precipitate a rising. Suspicion rose to alarm when sixty young men were discovered in an empty house. They were immediately put under armed guard. Similar happenings were reported from other villages, and amazement ran high. The explanation was that the Russian authorities had returned all men mobilised from these villages. Subsequently, without doubt, these men were responsible for giving to the enemy up-to-date and first-hand information as to the strengths and dispositions of the British and loyal Russian forces.

The native troops serving with us at this time were still seething with discontent. Their attitude was one of independence, and they maintained a policy of evading orders by long argument. It culminated in the disarming of a battalion on Troitsa heights. Three sides of a square were composed of Lewis guns and British troops.

The fourth side was the Dvina. Into the square marched the sullen Russians. They were ordered to pile arms. Then they marched away straight on to a barge which took them down river, where they could do no harm. We were taking no chances with them this time.

The Navy had been extraordinarily busy sowing mines in the Dvina calculated to prevent the enemy's flotilla from interfering with the evacuation of the troops. It is of interest to note that the enemy had not swept the advanced lines of mines until 19th September, over a week after our evacuating Troitsa. With the mining of the river, the rise of water brought about by the late August rains ceased, and it was obvious that the psychological moment had come to get as many ships of the flotilla down river as possible. By the end of August all the ships had passed down except H.M. Monitors "25" and "27" and the yacht *Kathleen*, all three of which were of too deep draught. This had called for exceptional efforts, as it entailed removing heavy guns, mountings, stores, and even the main engines, to lighten the ships sufficiently. H.M.S. *Humber* succeeded in getting away after an operation, unprecedented, I believe, in the annals of the Navy. In this ship there was scope for ingenuity and resource. She was protected by a belt of 3-inch armour, running fore and aft, and projecting 3 feet above the water-line. It was estimated to weigh 70 tons. Under all the attendant circumstances, this deadweight was no mean item, and it was agreed to remove it. But how?

It is hardly necessary to observe that those who build ships are in the habit of securing the plates by means of large screw bolts passed through both the plating and the ship's side. So securely are these fixed that usually they may not be removed till the day when the vessel falls to pieces from old age or beneath the strokes of the shipbreakers. In H.M.S. *Humber* each armour-plate weighed three tons and was secured by six bolts. In order to get at the bolt heads it was compulsory to enter the wing compartments, which were divided into spaces three by three by one and a half feet, just enough room for a small man to get in, but hardly enough to allow him to work with ease. The ship's company was assembled and the smallest men selected for the work. Special spanners of large dimensions were made, and with these and huge hammers the work of skinning the ship began.

Forty-eight hours' work sufficed to get the first plate off, and it fell into the Dvina with a mighty splash. After a few days at this new and diverting pastime, the men became experts at removing these bolts, and within a fortnight the whole of the seventy tons of armour-plating was resting on the bed of the river. And then the good ship *Humber* proceeded merrily down stream.

XIV.

The Intelligence branch now began to supply us with interesting news. Considerable reinforcements had been brought up by the Bolo, including the Finnish Red Guards (a particularly murderous lot of scoundrels) and the Foreign Legion, included in which—so rumour had it—were many Englishmen. The plan of campaign was to drive all the "ginger Englishmen" into the White Sea in one mighty sweep. This alarmed no one. But at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 6th of September (the original date set for evacuation) two enemy battalions launched an attack against the outposts on both banks of the river. The Bolo flotilla assisted by putting down a barrage. On the left bank the conformation of the ground, and the ease with which the outposts could be outflanked, caused them to fall back fighting across the Kodema river—two men being wounded and two captured in this movement. The next morning at dawn the Bolo advanced and occupied Kodema village, though his casualties must have been considerable, as a heavy shelling was directed on the place by our guns. The bridge over the river had been destroyed at dawn. Then he rested, apparently being satisfied with this small advance.

Mounted fusiliers on the right bank, in counter-attacking a similar attack by the Bolo on Ivanovskaya, succeeded in killing seventeen and capturing forty-five. This slight reverse had a similarly quietening effect on the enemy. The same evening the Intelligence branch reported the arrival of two more enemy battalions at Nijni Toima, a few miles behind the front line.

In thus wise began our evacuation troubles.

Whatever had been our opinion of the Bolshevik troops in the past, it was clear from these late encounters that we were now being attacked by troops of no mean order. Their tactics were good, their determination was strong, and their leaders were capable. We were half their numbers, with very few guns and fewer ships. In face of these handicaps we were under orders to evacuate by river on the tenth, loading all stores and troops into barges from the respective piers of Troitsa and Yakolevskoe. The hours and days were anxious ones. Mine-fields in the river prevented the enemy from advancing with his flotilla, but on land he had everything in his favour; and it was only the dogged brilliant resistance of a few British infantrymen that enabled the actual withdrawal to be carried out to plan.

With a few of the troops detailed to hold on to the last, a most successful harassing of the enemy began on the morning of the eighth. During the

previous night two platoons of fusiliers, commanded by a most gallant officer, crossed the Kodema river noiselessly in boats. At three in the morning they burst into Kodema village and did considerable execution with their bayonets. Seventeen Bolos were killed in the streets. The remainder fled in haste to Puchega, and the fusiliers returned across the river to breakfast. A mounted patrol working to the north-west spotted a column of the enemy three hundred strong at the same hour. Just before lunch a surprise attack was launched on this column by a troop of mounted and a platoon of dismounted fusiliers. The attack was an amazing success. Eighty-one of the enemy were despatched with the bayonet, and ninety-nine were taken prisoner. The remaining hundred and twenty bolted without firing a shot. In these two attacks our casualties amounted to one man slightly wounded, and the story goes that even that was an accident.

Five hundred Red Guards were attacking Ivanovskaya, on the other bank, at the same time. Our resistance completely dismayed them, and they retreated, leaving thirty dead on the field and numerous wounded. In haste and confusion they commenced to entrench, only to be shelled out by a gun across the river. These combined attacks, lasting over three days, had proved of an expensive nature for the enemy. His total casualties had been 163 killed, 200 wounded, and 146 prisoners, while we had lost but 1 man killed and 10 wounded. The ground he had gained on the left bank was of little account, for a river still impeded his progress. There was no bridge, and all the small craft were in our hands.

Yet he was exceedingly determined. Despite his reverses and his casualties, the morning of the ninth saw another and an even larger attack launched. His flotilla commenced to shell Ivanovskaya heavily, and at eight o'clock two battalions of the Finnish Red Guards delivered a most violent assault on the village from the north, south, and west. A small outpost force of mounted men, not more than fifty, was holding the line. Desperate fighting ensued. Our machine-guns caused hundreds of casualties, yet the Bolo continued to advance till he came to hand-to-hand fighting with the men in the outpost line. The officer who commanded the tiny force was himself the victor in a Titanic struggle with three huge Bolos. Having given the reserve force behind him sufficient warning, this officer decided to withdraw his men, if it were at all possible. At this time they were completely surrounded by the enemy, yet he succeeded in fighting his way back to the reserve line with his men, losing two killed and eight wounded and missing. This withdrawal of Green's Horse was one of the most stirring incidents of the campaign, and Lieutenant Green

was made a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order for his conduct.

Further advances of the enemy were frustrated by the resistance offered by the reserves. One company of infantry, with several machine-guns, kept the attacking Bolos at a respectful distance during the remainder of the day. Heavy shelling of all the villages on the left bank was begun by the enemy on the morning of the same day. He inflicted some loss on the civilian population of Sludka, but no infantry attack materialised.

While these events had been in progress, great efforts had been made with the embarkation of stores in the back areas. Loyal Russians from the vicinity had gathered in large numbers at the *preesten*, preferring to go down river, leaving their farms desolate, to suffering beneath the rule of the Soviet. Their future was a blank one. Perhaps they would start life again near Archangel. Perhaps they would seek their fortune in South Russia. So with their pathetic treasures, tied in faded 'kerchiefs, they left the land of their fathers. Eventually a great number of them left Archangel for the south.

The position in the Troitsa line was now a serious one. Two of H.M. Moniters, "25" and "27," in passing down the Dvina, had run on to sand-bars and remained fast, despite all efforts to refloat them. The troops holding the Dvina defences had been fighting hard for three days. Preparations to evacuate at dawn on the 10th had been completed and orders had been issued. Imagine the astonishment and chagrin that was general when counter-orders were received from G.H.Q. extending the date for evacuation to the 15th. The Officer Commanding on the Dvina, however, reviewing the situation, decided to proceed with the evacuation from Troitsa as originally arranged, and establish a new line some miles down the Dvina—a line which gave ample protection to the two grounded monitors. Desperate attempts were still being made to refloat them.

During the night therefore a silent withdrawal took place on both banks. The fatigued outposts held on till just before the early dawn, and then quietly retired with the fading night. The Bolo was completely ignorant of the proceedings. Specious wireless messages postponing the date of evacuation had been sent out, and we were aware that they had been picked up by the enemy's stations and transmitted to his junior commanders in the line. So they slept while we marched away. Embarkation went on speedily, and before noon all troops had passed from the upper reaches of the Dvina, and Troitsa was No Man's Land. Bridges had been most effectively destroyed by the Navy and the Engineers, and the last act in the drama was the firing of the two *preestens;* and as we pulled out into the channel

the flames licked high into the clear morning air.

Our last memory of Troitsa was the white cross on the red sandstone heights, marking the lonely resting-place of our dead.

"For not in quiet English fields
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best."

In anticipation of the rapid advance of the Bolo, once he discovered our departure, plans were made to gather all transport in the villages from Troitsa as far back as the proposed new line. The small forces detailed for this task had a peculiarly unpleasant time. *Storastas* were not overjoyed at having to summon all transport, nor were the peasants particularly pleased at having to yield up their ponies and *droshkies* to the retiring British. The pro-Bolshevik elements in these villages made their presence known, and occasional shots were fired at the *droshky* discoverers; in fact, on the right bank two men were wounded by these stray enemy sympathisers. The weary patrols with some hundreds of *droshkies* reached the new Pless-Shushega line soon after the infantry barges had arrived. New defensive positions had to be taken up, and this line was held till the 17th of September.

With considerable caution the Bolo commenced to move forward from his old line, miles beyond Troitsa. He shelled every village with such persistence that he set each of them on fire. His rate of progression was slow, timidity being the governing factor. After some days his patrols bumped into our line. As a result of that encounter he apparently realised that his project of driving the "ginger Englishmen" into the White Sea was likely to be too costly an operation, and that the wiser plan was to allow his enemies to withdraw in peace. So from the Bolshevik on the Dvina we had no further trouble, and we knew him no more. Not so on the Vaga river—but that is a later story.

Finally, on the 17th the convoy recommenced the journey down the river, releasing thereby, to their great jubilation, the corralled Russian peasants with their ponies and country carts. They drove off in tremendous haste for their homes, probably to be remobilised by the Bolshevik.

Upon the evacuation of this line the Russian troops who were holding what we hoped was to be their permanent front line, some miles in rear of Pless and Shushega, actually sent an urgent message begging us to hold on. This arrived just as the last of the troops were embarking. As the Russians had known of the proposed relief for over a fortnight, this final plea was unreasonable—to say the least.

The last company to leave Shushega underwent an amusing experience. As all means of withdrawal had been previously destroyed, it was ar-

ranged that the company should be conveyed by small rowing-boats to an island in the Dvina, to be picked up by fast-moving tugs, and thus to rejoin the main convoy. About five o'clock on the fateful morning the O.C. company decided to test the scheme by taking two non-commissioned officers over to the island in a boat belonging to the local *storasta*. The outward journey was accomplished, and after an inspection of the island the return began. So did the difficulties. After having been stuck fast in mid-stream for two hours on one of the inevitable sandbanks, the party, in disgust, decided to abandon the boat and walk home. This they did, the cynosure of all the eyes of the company. Every one enjoyed the position except the O.C. and his two companions, who were wading through icy-cold water which reached their waists. At nine o'clock the tug appeared with six small rowing-boats in tow, each boat containing a *barishnya*. The evacuation began, the maidens performing with the oars. At 10.15 the whole company, with the O.C. and his standard-bearer, had passed from the shore to the island and from the island to the tugs, and as the last of the troops embarked, three bridges on the mainland were blown sky-high. H.M. Monitors "25" and "27" were also destroyed. Throughout the stay at Pless and Shushega, strenuous efforts had been made to refloat the two vessels. Practically everything of any value had been removed by the morning of the 17th, and huge explosive charges ended the lives of the sturdy vessels.

Another encounter with the Bolshevik awaited us a little farther down river, the enemy having broken through on the Vaga river front. The British forces on the Vaga had handed over to the Russians and had been evacuated in advance of the Dvina force. An attack by the Bolos succeeded, and a small force penetrated down the Vaga to its junction with the Dvina. Here they ambushed in the woods, and as the last vessels of the Dvina convoy passed, heavy machine-gun fire was opened. Fortunately we had an 18-pounder mounted on a specially constructed barge, and the gunners co-operated with a landing party of marines and the coastal motor-boats in dispersing the enemy. Three Bolos suffered death at the hands of the marines. We nearly lost General Sadleir Jackson on this occasion, for he arrived in a coastal motor-boat and was greeted by a bullet which passed an inch or two above his head and shattered the glass screen of the tiny craft in which he was standing. Our casualties in this final attack numbered eleven, and the barges fired on were riddled with bullets. Altogether it was a warm half-hour.

XV.

The voyage of the ration barge "N.T. 252," and its subsequent abandonment, was the greatest event of the evacuation. It was a chapter of accidents from the commencement of the trip at Troitsa. Some thousands of pounds value in rations and rum were stored on the barge, and the personnel consisted of the D.A.D.S. and T. and his staff, two signallers, and a Russian bargee. A gale of wind was blowing when the good ship weighed anchor at Troitsa and passed a tow-rope to its particular tug. No sooner had the tug commenced to pant and puff most vigorously in an effort to tow, than it was taken completely in charge by the huge unwieldy barge, which in turn was under the control of the wind and the current. A second vessel, to escape being crushed against the *preesten*, manœuvred into position between "N.T. 252" and the tug, and succeeded in getting the tow-rope fouled in its propeller-shaft. After crashing into the hospital ship, the ration barge finished up by colliding with the ammunition lighter, amidst the loud and prolonged curses of British naval officers and Russian skippers.

Two hours' hard work resulted in the freeing of the tow-rope, and progress was resumed. Similar evolutions occurred before many more miles had been covered. On the first occasion the tug was pulled half a mile out of its course, and then ran aground. By dint of terrific exertions on the part of its engines, the vessel and the sand-bank finally parted company. On the other occasion the barge merely proceeded downstream broadside on, borne along by the swift current, collecting all the navigation lights in its journey, finally crashing into another ammunition barge before drifting into its right anchorage. The next few days were uneventful, chiefly owing to the fact that the convoy was stationary. On the 15th "N.T. 252" started off again in company with a barge containing one of the infantry battalions. September the 17th was a glorious day. The convoy was passing the bar at Khoboritza. For some unknown reason the skipper of the infantry tug tried a new channel, and succeeded in running both tug and barge aground. Bearing down upon them was "N.T. 252." Frantic signals of danger were being made by the infantry, but no one on the ration barge was troubling to notice them, or if they did, merely imagined them as some new form of Swedish drill. A sudden jolt and a bump, and the ration barge was also aground with her tug. Meanwhile the remainder of the convoy passed merrily down the right channel. The bargee of "N.T. 252" had greatly distinguished himself during

the grounding episode. Seeing no hope of preventing the disaster, he promptly dropped the anchor before the weigh was off, with the result that the barge sat on it, and a foot of the anchor went through the side.

The usual "S.O.S." was sent out, but nothing happened, all and sundry being too busily engaged in getting down river. Water was coming in rapidly, so a coffer-dam was constructed and filled with lard. This had the effect of making the hold fairly water-tight, and with the continuous use of hand-pumps the water was kept down. Nothing further happened for two days, except that the infantry were taken off their barge in small tugs, and they too disappeared in the direction of Archangel and home. "N.T. 252" was left alone on the bar. About eight o'clock in the evening a voice was heard coming from a tug which had approached, informing the occupants of the stranded barge that a paddler would come alongside in the morning to pull them off. Eleven o'clock next morning, and there was no sign of a paddler. Then a tug appeared, but was unable to get alongside. More shouting ensued between the D.A.D.S. and T. and the N.T.O. on the tug, and after momentarily expecting the paddler, it arrived two hours late. It came slowly up-stream, but on reaching the lower end of the bar something went wrong, for, to the chagrin of the watchers, she turned completely round and then ran ashore. It afterwards transpired that she had, at this critical juncture, succeeded in dropping her rudder. So the tug went back and towed the helpless paddler into deep water about a mile away.

Towing two small boats, the tug reappeared alongside, or as near alongside the ration barge as possible, and the crew of the latter began to transfer all personal kit into the two rowing-boats, thence to the N.T.O.'s tug, thence to the paddler. Unfortunately the wind had increased mightily, and it was raining hard. The weather dismayed the Russian owners of the rowing-boats, for, after making one journey, they vanished entirely. This happened at the same time as the N.T.O.'s tug was blown on to the sandbank, so that further operations were impossible.

The morning of September the 20th dawned. The barge was still fast aground, and the gale and rain continued. Not a sign of life was visible on river or land, till at dusk a small boy was observed lighting the navigation lamps on the river. His attention was attracted by means of rifle-shots, and he was ordered, under pain of death, to produce all available boats from the surrounding villages at dawn the following morning. Dawn arrived, with an increase in the velocity of the wind and the intensity of the rain. There was no sign of a boat, but about eight o'clock the weather cleared and four small rowing-boats arrived. The transfer-

ence of personal kit then recommenced in real earnest. This was a most tedious business, as the boats could only take a small load, and the journey comprised a trip to the island, the man-handling of the stores across the island, and thence across another stretch of river to where the paddler was lying. At last this loading of stores was over.

But the wretched occupants of the paddler were still unable to move, for although they could steam they could not steer, and the N.T.O.'s tug, which might have given them assistance, was still hard aground. So they waited. A few hours later another tug proceeding up-river appeared, and on being hailed informed the stranded party that it would be returning in an hour and would then tow the paddler down stream. The Russian idea of an hour may be a day, or two days, or a week. In order to ensure its return a boarding party escorted the newly-found vessel to its destination and brought it back well within the hour. The tow-rope was fixed and the journey resumed.

Ten *versts* farther another tug, of stronger type, was encountered and a change was made. All went well after the change for a few hours till the main steam-pipe of the new vessel burst. There were no casualties. The position now was that one vessel could steam but could not steer, and the other vessel could steer but could not steam. So the crews lashed the two ships together and they went as one.

On arrival at Ust Pinega, the N.T.O. appeared, and insisted on placing the skipper of the steamless tug under arrest for dereliction of duty. But after much argument he was convinced that it was necessary to proceed to Archangel for repairs, and the skipper's presence was absolutely essential if that town was ever going to be reached. With the addition of another tug containing some eighty Bolshevik prisoners, the convoy eventually arrived at the base, after having been the complete rearguard to the Dvina force. I should like to have had Comrade Gidrassow's description of this action of the department of supplies, for he would have undoubtedly laid stress on the incident I am about to relate, which occurred while the "N.T. 252" was aground.

All supplies had been handed over to the Russians, less a small amount of rum, which the D.A.D.S. and T. had been instructed to destroy if unable to carry it away. In pursuance of his instructions, the Major was busy breaking the bottles on the side of the barge, and allowing the contents to fall into the river. Hearing yells of delight from below, he glanced over, to behold two natives in a small boat, catching the contents of the bottles in their mouths. The fact of broken glass descending with the spirit failed to deter them.

The actual departure from North Russia was delayed till the 27th of September by the necessity of despatching civilians and refugees from Archangel. To protect this embarkation another temporary outpost line was constituted about twenty miles from the port, the infantry being supported by two monitors which had re-armed at Archangel. Finally we did embark, firstly on river steamers and then on to the transports lying in the White Sea, while the guns of H.M.S. *Fox*, trained on Archangel, effectively awed any Bolsheviks who might have desired a parting shot at the British. And so we came home across the grey seas and into the haven of Drake's Devon.

. . . . . .

As I wrote down these last words, the newsboys were shouting of the fall of Archangel into the hands of the Bolsheviks. To the God of all the Russias I winged a silent prayer for the brave men who had fought with us. I hope they escaped on the ice-breaker. There were not many great Russians. But Posinykoff, the shipbuilder, and Kissilof, the scout, were two of the most courageous and simple men that ever fought for a righteous cause.

And it was a righteous cause—to fight for Russia.

Some day we shall draw nearer to the great human heart that beats in that sad country. Purged by the fires of sacrifice, cleansed by the tears that have been shed, a great new land will arise.

Russia is only trying to work out her own destiny. She must arrive. Till she does, we, who fought for the soul of Russia in the days of her great tribulation, watch and pray.

## MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

ARE THERE TWO SEXES?—"HIC MULIER: OR THE MAN WOMAN"—THE SUFFRAGETTES OF JAMES I.'S REIGN—THE INFECTION OF THE MANNISH VICE—THE COLTISH DISEASE OF THE STAGGERS—THE WOMEN'S ATTACK ON THE UNIVERSITIES—THE MODERN BLUE-STOCKING AND THE ANCIENT SWASHBUCKLER—MR ASQUITH'S RETURN—POLITICS AN ENLARGED MORALITY?—THE REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—TERMINABLE PEERAGES.

In times of political disturbance or decay it has been noticed that the natural barriers of sex have been broken down. When all things are questioned and no fair answers are forthcoming, the simplest facts of life are disputed. If, being a stiff-necked Tory, you are reckless enough to express such a simple truth as that there are two sexes, you are checked immediately. "How do you know that?" demands the controversialist. In vain you appeal to history and tradition. What are history and tradition to the disputant who, to use his own phrase, is prepared to "deny the facts"? "Women are men," says he, "and if they aren't, they ought to be, and there's an end on't."

It is not quite the end of it, and yet, in England at any rate, the identity of the sexes has been assumed for the last ten years. All the duties of men have been thrust unthinkingly upon women, and as yet no reprisals have been made. Hercules has not yet asked for the distaff. And nowhere have the women demanded what they call their "rights" more loudly than in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They already enjoy all the privileges of education and examination. These privileges are not enough for them. They insist that they shall be admitted to full membership of the University, that they shall vote in the senate, and shall masquerade in male attire. The fact that Oxford and Cambridge were endowed to be the resort of men alone does not weigh with them. They do not object to lay hands upon what is not theirs. Nor have they any respect for an ancient tradition. Their policy follows their whim, and they care not if they provoke, for no purpose and without excuse, a war of the sexes.

We do not wish to argue here an old case which has been argued many times before. It is enough to hope that, in the coming controversy, the men will have the spirit to defend what is their own, that they will turn a deaf ear to a certain lady, who, presiding over a notorious seat of learning, once impudently asserted that men are disqualified by their sex from taking part in a discussion which they alone have a right to initiate. We

refer to the dispute because it is the last act in an old drama, on which the curtain has always been rung down in disaster.

The contest, indeed, began with the world, and its continuance is a proof of woman's restlessness, if not of woman's wisdom. When Athens was threatened with extinction after the Peloponnesian war there was a desperate attempt made, at least upon the stage, to break down the barriers of sex. In Aristophanes' comedy the ladies grow beards, don their husbands' garments, are booted after the Laconian fashion, and carry staves. It is true that Aristophanes treated the usurpers with a proper contempt, and that their aberration was as transitory as unsuccessful. And still, in ridicule's despite, the Man-Woman has emerged at intervals through the centuries, until in her last (and present) incarnation she would, if she could, declare herself independent of her secular enemy, and demand in the universities, as in politics, not equality but government.

From one example you may learn all, and we will choose an illustration from the reign of James I., when Woman was more resolute than ever to masquerade as Man. The enterprise and courage of those who had fought England's battle in the glorious reign of Elizabeth met with an inevitable reaction; and while the love-locks of Mankind inclined to effeminacy, Womankind, donning the doublet and hose, sought its proper revenge in a barbarity which should disconcert its rivals. Who set the fashion it would be hard to say. Maybe it was the adventurous Mary Frith; at any rate, by 1620, the fashion was firmly established upon the rock of custom, and the pamphleteers of the time are pitiless in their denunciation. The best and the rarest of all the pamphlets is ingenuously called, "Hic Mulier: or the Man Woman." The nameless author, whose work may boast a reference in Burton's *Anatomy*, writes with energy and spirit, and his subject incites him to an eloquent vituperation. His title-page, composed after the scrupulous habit of the time, already forces the note. "Hic Mulier: or the Man Woman," thus it runs, "being a medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Femines of our Times Exprest in a brief Declamation." There follows an epigraph, characteristic in its inaccuracy: *Non omnes possumus omnes*, and by way of a motto the words: "Mistris, will you be trim'd or truss'd?" The pamphlet falls not an inch below the promise of the title-page, and it is of especial interest just now, because it shows what form and shape the unrest of women assumed three centuries ago. It is an heroic mixture of redundancy and epigram, of scholarship and ignorance; the author attacks his thesis with the fearlessness born of a good cause, and with the picturesque sense that belonged to an age

when prose and controversy were not yet heavy with years. If you deplore his scurrility, you remember that it was the habit of his time to prefer a bludgeon to a rapier. At the outset he declares that since the days of Adam women were never so masculine, and though the Man-Woman has always been a figure of imagination, it is possible that the seventeenth century shares with our own age the credit of producing the sturdiest warriors against the convention of sex. But while to-day the women would make an onslaught upon the domain of intellect, in 1620 they were agog to imitate no more than the carriage and costume of their unconscious rivals. Then they would have changed "the modest attire of the comely hood, cowl, coif, handsome dress or kerchief to the cloudy, ruffianly, broad-brimmed hat, and wanton feather, the modest upper parts of a concealing straight gown, to the loose, lascivious open embracement of a French doublet." The elegant lady, in fact, harboured the ambition to become a swash-buckler, and you are confident that she would have rivalled the Roaring Girl herself, if she could, and drawn her sword upon the first offender. But the extravagance of her costume was not in her chronicler's eyes her deadliest offence. Incredible though it seem, she would, this Diana of an effeminate age, cut and clip her hair ("the glory of a fair large hair") to the despicable fashion of the Puritans. Worse still, she would take swords for needles, "bawdy-jigs" for prayer-books, "giant-like behaviours" for quiet gestures, and "all mimic and apish incivility for womanly modesty." So the pamphleteer breaks his butterfly upon a wheel. So he thunders in anger, when he might more happily have smiled away what after all was little else than a freak of fashion.

Whence did they come, these bold apes of masculinity, and what the manner of their upbringing? Did they ever know comeliness or modesty? "Fie, no," answers their detractor, "they never walked in those paths." They are, in truth, but the rags of gentry, "torn from better pieces for their foul stains," and as their origin is obscure, so, he hopes, they will go hence unpitied and unremembered. Their deformity he finds barbarous, "in that it is exorbitant from Nature, and an antithesis to kind." And straightway he rates them for their "ruffianly and uncivil" actions, when he might more justly have jibed at their wanton disguise of beauty, at their reckless distortion of gracious shape and handsome feature. Surely the errors of a fashionable extravagance, which are committed with gaiety and freedom, and which bring discredit only upon the guilty ones, yield more easily to laughter than to declamation. But declamation was the habit of the time, and the author of "Hic Mulier" lashes himself to a fury over the gestures of the ladies, who were his night-

mare. How shall you characterise their gestures, he asks indignantly, which are as "piebald and as motly various" as their disguises? How, indeed, he answers for himself, save that, like themselves, they are barbarous; and if they be not barbarous, why then, he insists in a noble peroration, "make the rude Scythian, the untamed Moor, the naked Indian, or the wild Irish, lords and rulers of well-governed cities."

Nor in the seventeenth century was this folly of mannishness merely mad; it was infectious also, and none might escape the contamination. Like love, it visited the cottage as well as the palace, and all women felt the poison in a varying degree. The greater the station of the victim, the more violent was the disease, since fine-feathered hats and velvet doublets were beyond the reach of the slender purse. But even the poorest made shift to disguise her sex, became apt to anger, was pursuant of revenge, and held a restless hand ever upon a sword-hilt. "What are they all," asks the declaimer in an ingenious passage, "what are they all more than as silver bells on a jackanape's coat that show fair and chime sweet, but save not poor Jack from one lash of the whip when his knavery requires it? No more shall their greatness or wealth save them from one particle of disgrace which these monstrous disguises have cast upon them."

And he who attacked "the coltish disease of the staggers" with so bitter a pen was still a devout worshipper of women, and he supported his adoration with a more than doubtful theology. Man, he says, was formed at his first creation of slime and earth, woman of a purer and more refined metal, and he would have women sensible of their loftier destiny. "You in whom are all the harmonies of life, the perfection of symmetry," thus he apostrophises such as are loyal to their nature, "the true and curious consent of the most fairest colours and the wealthy gardens which fill the world with living plants! Do but you receive virtuous inmates (as what palaces are more rich to receive heavenly messengers?) and you shall draw men's souls unto you with that severe, devout, and holy adoration, that you shall never want praise, never love, never reverence." Besides, this whimsical casuist is firmly convinced that costume was designed and preordained by God, that coats were made for our first parents after a divine pattern—one for the man and one for the woman. The man's coat, says he, was fit for his labour, the woman's fit for her modesty; and he deems it a hideous blasphemy to lose the model contrived by "the great workmaster of Heaven." The argument, maybe, is unsound, but it is admirably intentioned; and it is devised, moreover, with an appreciative sympathy that may seem lacking in the more spirited passages of the

declamation. Thus the author deplores with sincere indignation the follies and disguises of his time, wherein no distinction was made between the city and the court, wherein the merchant's wife dressed herself up in gewgaws which were an extravagance in the wanton of Whitehall. It is not the splendour that affrights him, but the inappropriateness which prompts "such unnatural conceptions, that the whole world is not able to make a Democritus big enough to laugh at their foolish ambitions." And he concludes with an exhortation which not only resumes his displeasure, but advantageously displays the native energy of his style. "The Lacedæmonians," so he writes, "seeing that their children were better taught by examples than precept, had hanging in their houses in fair painted tables all the virtues and vices that were in those days reigning, with their rewards and punishments. Oh, have you but in your houses the fashions of all attires constantly and without change held and still followed through all the parts of Christendom? Let them but see the modest Dutch, the stately Italian, the rich Spaniard, and the courtly French, with the rest, according to their climates, and they will blush that in a full fourth part of the world there cannot be found one piece of a character, to compare or liken with the absurdity of their masculine invention. Nay, they shall see that their naked countryman, which had liberty with his shears to cut from every nation of the world one piece or patch to make up his garments, yet amongst them all could not find this miscellany or mixture of deformities, which only by those (which whilst they retained one spark of womanhood, were both loved and admired) is loosely, indiscreetly, wantonly, and unchastely invented." Such the woman-question of the seventeenth century, and such the method of its discussion. The author is not content to laugh folly out of countenance. He frowns when he should smile; he chides when ridicule would have been an apter weapon. He has weakened the force of his argument by a wanton exaggeration, and wins a grudging sympathy for his enemies by a style which, for all its force, is unsaved by humour. But his pamphlet is a veritable curiosity, and at least he reminds you that though controversy may change it never dies.

The odious fashion passed away. Would that the controversy which now disturbs what was once the cloistered serenity of our old Universities had as fair a chance of an honourable solution! But, alas, not only are our opponents stubborn with ignorance, but their masculinity is far less amiable than the mannish extravagance which roused the ire of the ancient pamphleteer. After all, the sins of the ladies who in the seventeenth century wore plumed hats and carried swords, are not without a humorous attraction. They yielded

to a genuine vanity, not to a false reason, and they had no other aim than the adornment of their person. The taste which persuaded them to clip and crop the glory of their hair was bad enough, but the evil ended with their fallen locks—and who would grudge a feather to their cap, if it were worn with grace and impudence? While they usurped the costume and carriage of man, they had no desire to oust him from his place or reduce him to serfdom. Politics were as little to their taste as learning, and they designed no assault either on the Universities or the Commons. Resenting the effeminacy of the other sex, they determined to show themselves the better fellows; but they achieved their purpose without the smallest suspicion of New-Womanliness, and they resolutely preferred a prompt action to a vain theory. You cannot imagine them clubbed together in a close sombre room, discussing the treatment of recalcitrant husbands who refused to do the housework; you cannot imagine them setting forth in base English and other baser sentiment the fabulous injustice of their fate. No, they hung a sword at their hip and swaggered in the Mall without a word of whining or complaint; and though their braggart pose shocked the pamphleteers of the seventeenth century, we who have watched the insidious policy of their descendants, accepting over and over again a "final" settlement, only to enlarge their demands, would gladly give in exchange the modern blue-stocking for the ancient swashbuckler.

For the swashbuckler was frank in her admiration of an alien coat, and you may be sure she carried it with an air. The woman who knocks at the door of men's Universities is also fighting for the "right" (as she calls it) to wear the costume of a man; she would don the cap and gown of bachelorhood, and claim with them the freedom of college courts, and a seat at the high table. But, cherishing a priggish contempt for dress, she demands raiment designed for men and unbecoming her nether skirt, not in the proper spirit of the dandy, but with a greedy desire to filch the privileges which this raiment symbolises. She sees herself in an ardent fancy taking the floor of the Senate House, a square cap set sternly upon her close-cropped hair, a monkish gown thrown round the shoulders formed to wear a comelier mantle. And she claims these ill-fitting embellishments not with the frank curiosity of one half in love with strangeness, but with an imperious desire to grasp that which was endowed and intended for others. The world is wide, and our old Universities occupy but modest corners; yet the Man-Woman of to-day would leave vast tracts uninhabited, if she might lay hands upon the houses which centuries of exclusiveness have consecrated to man.

The proper solution of the

question is that the women should establish a university of their own, which should have the power to grant the degrees which they covet. Thus they might obtain justice and avoid insanity. One thing is certain: if once the women take hold of Oxford and Cambridge, they will, if they can, presently exclude the men from the seats of learning which were established for them. Revolution is never content to attain the object which it set out to achieve. Lenin, pretending to aim at freedom, has attained the vilest tyranny ever known to mankind. And women, having secured admission to the Universities, will insist that they shall be theirs and theirs alone. It is said that concession is inevitable, because the battle has continued for many years. There could not be a worse argument. Many years ago Disraeli denounced those false Conservatives who preserved their institutions like pheasants, only to destroy them. And if the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are weak enough to surrender their privileges, they will deserve the extinction which will surely follow. Whither, then, will the men in search of learning betake themselves? They will not demand the policy of the open door at Newnham or Girton. They will not batter upon the sacred walls of Holloway College. Perhaps they will take refuge in the forgotten, disembodied University of Stamford, and defy for a while the encroachments of women—for a while only, since, wherever they go, those who preach equality and intend exclusion will surely follow them.

If anything were needed to prove that politicians have short memories, the triumphant return of Mr Asquith to Parliament should be evidence enough. He came back to Westminster blessed by Lord Robert Cecil and applauded by Lord Chaplin. In one moment of success all his crimes were forgotten. Lord Chaplin, we believe, is a staunch upholder of the constitution, and he welcomed to the national council the man who had passed the Parliament Act, and who, by his neglect, had involved Ireland in bloodshed and civil rebellion. What Lord Robert Cecil's opinions are none would venture to explain. But he desired, no doubt, England's victory in the war, and he smiled approval upon the man who, in 1914, though he boasts that he knew in 1912 all about Germany's warlike intention, contrived that England should be wholly unprepared. But the ways of politicians are strange, and past finding out. "Politics," said Burke, "so far as I understand them, are only an enlarged morality." Were he alive to-day he would be forced to correct his definition. No longer are politics and morality even remotely akin. Membership of the House of Commons changes a man's character in the twinkling of an eye, and persuades him to do and say things which in his days

of honest freedom he would never have dreamed of doing or saying. However, Mr Asquith, who a year ago was execrated by the mob, is now the mob's darling — for a moment. We are told by his adulators, who believe in the sanctity of temporary success, that his presence in the House will turn the whole current of public life. In a few weeks Mr George will lie prostrate at the feet of the man whom he displaced, and the country will go to sleep again, pleasantly convinced that nothing can be wrong with the State so long as Mr Asquith is there to utter sonorous platitudes about free trade, the hardships of Germany, and Liberal principles.

Whether Tweedledum or Tweedledee wins in the duel is not a matter of great importance. But if Mr Asquith were to get the better of all his adversaries, he would find a hundred awkward promises clamouring for fulfilment. To say nothing of the pledges which, in competition with Labour, he gave at Paisley, there are many solemn undertakings which go back to the days when he was a callous and irresponsible Prime Minister. There is, for instance, "the debt of honour," famous in its infamy, which has never been paid. When Mr Asquith, for reasons of his own, destroyed the constitution by abolishing the veto of the House of Lords, he acknowledged the reform of that House as a "debt of honour." What he meant to do with the House, or by what method he was minded to reform it, we do not know. It is still a mystery whether or not he intended to restore to the Upper Chamber the power of veto, a restoration which is of far higher importance than the mere composition of the House. A single chamber is not consonant with the preservation of the monarchy, and in times of reckless change like our own, when revolution is freely offered as a bribe to the voters, a powerful Senate is above all things essential. The House of Commons declines daily both in morals and intelligence. Our governors have long ceased to ask or to think what is right. The interest of their ambition is to win popularity, and unless we are willing to see our Empire flung away in exchange for an electoral majority, we must insist that Mr Asquith's debt of honour is paid by somebody.

In the last five-and-twenty years the Peerage has undergone a complete change. Peers have been made recently with small pretext or none at all. A contribution to the party funds has been adjudged an excellent excuse for ennoblement. The Radicals especially, having a natural love of titles, have insisted upon Peerages as the natural reward for what they call political services. Mr George's creations have been peculiarly reckless and numerous. The result is that the Peerage has largely ceased to be aristocratic. It has become a collection of business men

and lawyers, differing little from the House of Commons in quality or composition. The proportion of the Peers who have inherited their titles from a long line of ancestors to those newly created grows smaller year by year. Moreover, the Peerage is gradually being divorced from the land, and thus is undergoing another change. The Death Duties and the War have done their work, and the Peers are no longer what they were once — the fathers of the countryside, the proper representatives of the landed interest. Yet in the mouths of our demagogues all the Peers are the members of "an effete aristocracy." The gentlemen who hold aloft the banner of Labour are not at the pains to discriminate between the old and the new creations. Their jealousy persuades to include in a general condemnation all those who are honourably distinguished. And the truth is that the reform of the House of Lords cannot be undertaken intelligently until its modern and composite nature is clearly understood.

When the House of Lords consisted of Peers of ancient race, there was a vast deal to be said in its favour. The hereditary principle is wise and sound, as it was interpreted of old. It is more difficult to defend when it is increased almost daily by the accession of the party hack. It grows unwieldy and confused, and democratic and fearless though it be, it must still bear the weight of prejudice flung upon it by the angry Radicals whose increase has debauched it. How, then, shall it be reformed? A friend has sent us the inglorious suggestion of what he calls a "terminable Peerage," which he thinks is not hostile to the spirit of our institutions. "The cardinal principle put forward," says he, "is that no Peer should transmit to his successor his actual rank in the Peerage, but the rank immediately below it, and such successor on inheriting an inferior title should be summoned to Parliament in right of such inferior title. Thus all Barons would become life Peers only; Viscounts would be Peers for two lives—a Viscount in the case of a created Viscount, and a Baron for his immediate successor. For sufficiently great services a man would be rewarded with any rank up to and including a Dukedom, which would make his four successors Peers of the Realm in gradually descending rank."

Of course the son of a Peer who distinguished himself in the service of his country would be restored to his father's rank, or set above it, as a just reward of his noble actions. Thus there would always be an incentive to the eldest son of a Peer to justify his rank, and to take care that the honour done his family should not be withdrawn. Moreover, the plan would not be displeasing to the statesmen of our Dominions — statesmen who are born out

of sympathy with the hereditary principle, and whose presence in our House of Lords would be welcome and valuable. If, then, some reform of the House of Lords be necessary, and we are told that it is; if the House, noisily insulted by Radical Ministers, is still increased by those Ministers at the rate of twenty a year, then the plan of diminution outlined above is at once moderate and conservative. It does not break with the tradition of the past—it preserves something of the spirit of ancient times; and it would ensure us presently a House of Lords wise enough and strong enough to check revolutionary legislation, and so shaped that even the demagogue would hesitate to shout "backwoodsmen" if ever his passing whim were thwarted. At any rate, it would be a far better scheme of reform than any hitherto suggested. What sort of an Upper House should we get if we permitted its members to be elected by the mob, to be chosen by County Councils, or sent up by the House of Commons to do their tyrannical bidding in another place? The system of "terminable Peerages" would at least ensure us a House of Lords whose opinion could not be purchased by the House of Commons, and which would do its work of veto and revision with freedom, courage, and independence.

But if such a House were to be effective, it must be protected against insult. It must stand on an equality with the House of Commons, a rough body, whose insensate campaign conducted ten years ago against the House of Lords has robbed that Assembly of all faith in itself or in its duties. It must be protected also against the lavish introduction of undesirables. The sale of honours to ambitious politicians must be sternly suppressed, and in future no man must be given a barony whose elevation is not generally acclaimed. From time to time we are assured by anxious Ministers that no Peerage has ever been bought or sold. And then the next list of honours gives the lie to the rash assurance. However, there is as little reason why the House of Lords should not be permitted to act as heretofore as a check upon the folly and arrogance of the Commons, as that a place within its walls should be chaffered for in the market-place. And though we have a natural and well-founded distrust of change, we are convinced that if reform come to us in the form of terminable Peerages, no violence will be done to the safety or the spirit of the Constitution.

*Printed by William Blackwood and Sons.*